

Naemmerlein / J.

THOMAS a KEMPIS,
CANON REGULAR of the
Order of St. AUSTIN,
His FOUR BOOKS of the
Imitation of CHRIST;

Together with his
THREE TABERNACLES
OF
Poverty, Humility, and Patience,
Not before in *English*.

With a
LARGE INTRODUCTION,
Shewing the Practical Method of the Book.
Faithfully translated from the Original Latin.

By W. WILLYMOTT, LL. D. Vice-Provost
of King's College in Cambridge.

L O N D O N :
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in *Little Britain*. MDCCXXII.

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TO THE
UNHAPPY SUFFERERS
BY THE
Great National Calamity
OF
SOUTH-SEA,
The TRANSLATOR
Humbly Dedicateth
This NEW VERSION of the
Imitation of CHRIST,
BY
THOMAS à KEMPIS:

Together with his THREE TABERNACLES OF
POVERTY, HUMILITY, and PATIENCE.

*Wishing them Increase of Grace
and Comfort in the perusal of the
Holiest and Wisest of Books, One
only excepted, and to which of all
human Composures it is most like: Be-*

DEDICATION.

ing plain and simple in style; quick and lively, and of marvellous secret force to pierce the heart, and draw it unto GOD: Yielding a present comfortable remedy of every Grief or Disease, every Wound or Sicknes incident to the Soul of Man: Finally, containing a truly Apostolical, and even Divine Weight of Doctrine; and therefore ever new, tho' never so often read.

10 JY 60

THE

The TRANSLATOR *to the*
READER.



HE design and endeavour of this Translation, was to present to the purely English Reader, in its native simplicity, as rare and accomplish'd a piece of Devotion as ever fell from a human Pen; and to bring my Copy as near the Original, as the change and propriety of Language would permit, without adding any new Ornamentals of my own on the one hand, or embasing and depraving my Author on the other. But might not the Reverend Dr. *Stanhope*, Dean of *Canterbury*, well have sav'd me this pains? I think not: For my Attempt is a meer Translation; His, a Paraphrase; which tho' every way excellent, and worthy the great Man, yet is it something as different from a Translation, as it is superior (in point of ability) to the best possible performance of that kind. Notwithstanding, as the variety of Books of Devotion is of admirable use, in order to suit the various tempers, tastes and appetites of the Soul: So of one and the same Treatise, or Help to Devotion, this Man

To the READER.

may relish better a close Translation, another a more enlarg'd and flowing Paraphrase. Besides, what the Criticks observe of some of the choicest Writings of Antiquity, is, I am persuaded, equally true of this Author; That nothing can be taken from, or added to him, without detriment, even by the most skilful and masterly Hand. I might add, that this Book containing in it the Sum and Quintessence of Devotion, and furnishing the Soul with proper Weapons in all imaginable Attacks of the World, the Flesh and the Devil, ought, if possible, to be committed entirely to memory; and for that purpose, the shorter the better. The Paraphrase I consulted carefully all along, and am as much beholding to it, as in my way of Translating I could be. And thus I take leave of that and its Author, a Man adorn'd (for Praise is the just due, and too often the sole reward of Merit) with all accomplishments requisite for the most sublime Station in the Church.

The *Practical Method* of the Book (which if not altogether intended, is however very ingenious) was drawn up by *Jacob Horstius*, who has publish'd a curious Edition of the Select Pieces of our heavenly Author: Concerning whom I shall conclude with

To the READER.

with applying to the Piece before us, what an excellent Life-Writer observes of Mr. *Herbert's Temple*, or *Sacred Poems* and *Ejaculations*; "A Book, says he, by the frequent
" reading whereof, and the assistance of that
" Spirit that seemed to inspire the Author,
" the Reader may attain Habits of Peace and
" Piety, and all the Gifts of the Holy Ghost
" and Heaven; and may by still reading,
" still keep those sacred Fires burning upon
" the Altar of so pure a Heart, as shall free
" it from the anxieties of this world, and keep
" it fix'd upon things that are above".

For my own Performance; As an eloquent, and deservedly celebrated Preacher (that has since lost his Surname; together I fear with a little of his Christian good humour) in an Epistle Dedicatory before a Strange Miraculous Book, not yet refin'd with Parliamentary Fire, smoothes over his Upright (save in a late Crooked * Election) and Plump-Benefic'd

* Anotoriously Unstatutable Election of a Schoolmaster, directly against our Patron's Oath, and against Their Oaths that concurr'd with him, and (what might have startled Men less resolv'd in Iniquity) against the noble and never to be forgotten Petition and Remonstrance of the Four Faithful, Unshaken, Unseduc'd, Synonymous Brethren. But what are Oaths? What are Petitions and Remonstrances to the Attack of a Court armed with Prebends, Deanaries and Bishopricks? They are as *the Cords upon Sampson's*

To the READER.

Benefic'd Patron, telling him, he should not have been so uncomplaisant, as to have dedicated that Treatise to Him, if he had not had a good opinion of it Himself (the only Man in *England* I dare say that has :) So unless I had thought I had done my Author justice, that is, in other words, if I had not a tolerable good opinion of my Translation, (perhaps too without a Rival) I should not have been so uncourtly as to offer it to the Publick, and to present even to my South-Sea

sons Arms, which became as the flax that was burnt with fire. And yet before this All-conquering Application, when a private Acquaintance (upon what Motive I cannot imagine, unless perchance that of his Chastity) recommended the Candidate to his Uprightness, his Uprightness very readily, and I believe sincerely objected, Why, Dr. says he, you know he is an *Arian*. Ay, and had he been a *Mahometan*, the sprinkling him with a little Holy Water from St. *James's* and *Leicester* Fields, would have made him a right good Christian in thy Court-decoy'd, Walpoliz'd (a hard word, but his Uprightness, I believe, understands it) and Beam-blinded Eye, O pious *Henry*!

N. B. To the Statute-Breakers, I, in the behalf of good King *Henry*, enjoyn as a Penance, the reading and considering well one Chapter of the IMITATION, in the Order of the Book, every Morning before their Coffee; and to compleat the Penance, that they read it, not in the Original, but in my Translation; and to prevent all Collusion and Juggling among them, that they perform what's enjoyn'd Themselves, without shuffling it off, as they do their Preaching, to their Conducts, and other most scandalous Crape, to the offence of many, but especially of St. *Paul*;

To the READER.

Sea Beggars what I did not like my self; especially since Translation is of such a nice ticklish nature, that Reputation is easily lost by it, and at best, not much got: Which consideration, I fear, discourages Men of better ability from a very useful exercise of their Pen, and leaves to unskilful hands the sole propriety, in a manner, of that ungrateful, ill-cultivated Province. And this may be the reason that we have so few Good, and so many Vile Translations. I wish those of another kind, not from Language to Language, but from S—e to S—e, were better.

And now, if I thought I could trust my Reader with a Secret, I would acquaint him,

*Qui se
Vultum ferre negat Vernonum posse minoris.* Hor.

This Penalty is to remain in full force to the End of the next Parliament; provided it does not continue above seven years.

One of the Poor men (for one with another they are not worth above forty thousand Pounds a Man) is newly paid for breaking his Oath with a Patent

In Summer round the Park to ride;

In Winter never to Reside.

Satan and the Whigs (to give Both their due) are very good Masters, and pay their Servants extraordinary Wages. This must be acknowledg'd by their greatest Enemies.

Their poor Fig-leaf of a Dispensation (a Rag of the old Whore) I shall blow away at one Puff, in my next Impression.

———*Vain Covering, if to hide*

Their Guilt and dreaded Shame.

Paradise Lost B. 9.

that

To the READER.

that the Two Books below mention'd, cost me very near Four hundred Pounds Printing; and that they have not yet been so kind as to return me a fourth part of my Money; nor without His especial help I believe ever will; and this for a reason I shall acquaint him with when I see him. In the mean time I beg him to step in to my succour, and to consider, that tho' the Goods were not bespoke by him, yet they were made purposely for him. If he will oblige me in this particular, that is, buy Two the very best Books of the Kind extant (for a Man may without vanity commend what is not His) I promise to return the obligation in my way, and will translate him with all the little skill I am master of, another Volume of *Thomas à Kempis* (if I find he likes this) and Print it as well. Farewell Gentle, Candid, Courteous, Ingenuous Reader.

10 JY 60

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THE

THE
PRACTICAL METHOD

Of the Four Books of the

Imitation of Christ:

Wherein is shewn the Scope, the
Order, and Progress of the Spirit-
ual Life, observ'd by the Author
in these Books.

*The ŒCONOMY, or general Dispo-
sition of the Four Books of the Imit-
ation of CHRIST.*



AMONGST the Ascetick Writers, that
have laid down rules for chris-
tian perfection, the religious and
devout *Thomas à Kempis*, Canon
Regular of the Order of St. Austin, hath
undoubtedly, and by consent of all, car-
ry'd

ry'd away the prize, in the Books left behind him, intituled, *Of the Imitation of Christ*.

Nevertheless some have complain'd that they can find no order or method in these Books; not so much that it is really wanting in them, as that it escapes the notice and observation of ordinary readers.

Hereupon a certain person had a fancy to try, if he could not in some sort delineate in words the secret method or plan of this piece; which, behold, we here present to you.

Observe therefore that the *Imitation of Christ* is here practically deliver'd; which manner of instruction he best understands, who best practises what he reads.

And indeed our THOMAS seems in this work to have followed a natural, and necessary method, in beginning with the first and more imperfect degree of the *Imitation of Christ*, and ascending by little and little, even to the highest and most accomplish'd, in such exact order, that he that would take any other way, seems not like to arrive so easily and commodiously at his journey's end.

He treats at first of the PURGATIVE LIFE, which is the beginning, and foundation
dation

dation as it were, of Perfection: Wherein he introduces a Master or Father-director of the Spiritual Life; because this life is not so high advanc'd, as to seem to stand in need of the immediate instructions of GOD; and the Scholar is so ignorant of spiritual things, that it is fitter for him to hear and hearken to a Master, than to discourse, or interrogate.

The ILLUMINATIVE WAY contains the whole body of doctrine relating to the Spiritual Life; wherefore GOD is with good reason introduc'd talking with Man, because therein are deliver'd lessons worthy of GOD; a method which few authors (excepting the holy penmen) have well acquitted themselves in; namely, to introduce GOD speaking things worthy of the Deity.

The disciple having now made a good progress, does not only lend an ear to the documents or instructions of GOD, but sets himself also to the practice of them; wherein meeting oftentimes with great temptations and difficulties, he has recourse to GOD, sometimes for grace and divine aid; sometimes for pardon and counsel.

In the UNITIVE WAY, the Soul is united to GOD; which is chiefly effected by the

participation of the Body and Blood of *Jesus Christ*: Wherein two things are observable; the preparation for the union, and the union itself. Both are of such mighty importance, that God is deservedly introduc'd teaching, and Man practically executing.

Of the PURGATIVE WAY in particular.

But now (to come to each particular distinct way by itself) the *Purgative* he divides into two parts: The former part, which is the subject of the whole first Book, treats of the beginnings of the *Purgative Way*: The latter part, which is the subject of the whole second Book, treats of the progress of *Beginners*, and consists of five degrees, or chief heads.

I. What it is to imitate, and to follow *Christ*.

II. Lest any one should err or mistake in imitating, let him make use of a Guide and spiritual Master.

III. Because a Master is of no use, if there be wanting in the Scholar a will to learn; a desire to overcome his passions is excited in him.

IV. From this desire and victory follows
natu-

naturally an effectual purpose to commit no sin.

V. This purpose is confirmed and strengthened by the fear of God, and by compunction of heart.

The progress, and ultimate end or perfection of this Life consists of four other degrees, or heads.

1. From the fear of God springs a hatred of the world, which is enmity with God.

2. The world being despised persecutes the servant of God, who to defend himself has need of patience in adversities and persecutions.

3. He that bears adversities with constancy of mind, breaks forth thereby into a love of *Christ*, and into a relish of, and delight in spiritual things.

4. But he ought rather to turn his mind in this life to the Cross of *Christ*, than to consolation: Therefore he is taught to desire the way of the Cross, and that of mortification.

Of the ILLUMINATIVE WAY in particular.

The *Illuminative Way* is wholly conversant about the Imitation of *Christ*; whom he that would perfectly imitate, and

6 The INTRODUCTION to

that desires to be perfectly purg'd and cleans'd;

1. Must acquaint himself with God, and maintain an internal conversation with him by prayer.

2. Such a conversation naturally begets in him a strong disposition to humility.

3. Humility casts out all degrees of hypocrisy and insincerity, and introduces purity of heart, and truth.

4. Truth carries him to the love of God and of his neighbour.

5. From this love follows the hatred of himself, and the exercise of penitence.

6. Which exercise, that it may not prove hurtful, must be moderated and governed by the desire of executing only the will of God.

7. And to execute this, he must with great zeal and affection embrace and hold fast obedience.

8. Which cannot be perfect, without an indifference to all things.

9. From this indifference follows perpetual peace of soul.

10. From peace follows liberty of spirit.

11. From liberty of spirit follows a desire of flying to *Christ*, and of putting off the load of the flesh.

12. Which

12. Which being thus not to be done the soul at least earnestly covets solitude that she may converse with God all alone without distraction or disturbance.

13. And yet in this very solitude she has no desire or expectation of being happy; but rather to be a companion and partner of the passion and Cross of *Christ*.

14. Unto whom she hopes to be joined, not for her own merits, but by the grace and mercy of God: Which is the last degree and crown of all perfection.

Of the UNITIVE WAY.

The *Unitive Way* consists in a perfect union with God, which is principally obtain'd by the reception of the Sacrament of the Body of *Christ*, whereunto a threefold preparation is requir'd.

1. *The more remote.*
2. *The more immediate.*
3. *The conjoin'd* with the Communion itself; and each of these is threefold.

Every of these degrees of perfection THOMAS explains in several Chapters: Which degrees we will remark in their order, by running over, briefly and methodically, the Contents of those Chapters.

8 *The* INTRODUCTION *to*

The special or more particular method of each single Book of Thomas à Kempis, of the Imitation of Christ.

B O O K I.

Wherein the beginnings of the *Purgative Way* are laid down.

I. *What it is to imitate, and to follow Christ.*

TO follow *Christ*, is not to have profound disputes and speculations about the nature of God; but to imitate the holy life of *Christ*. CHAP. I.

For the practice of that which is good, is better than the knowledge of it only. Therefore a plain countreyman, that leads a good life, is preferable to a proud philosopher, with all his refin'd notions, and deep contemplations. CHAP. II.

Now in order to practice, knowledge is necessary; not that which is learnt by human ministry, but by a divine principle speaking within us; and this is acquir'd by
morti-

mortifying the inordinate affections of the heart. CHAP. III.

II. *A Director, or spiritual Father must be chosen.*

But we must not believe or do every thing that is suggested to us, or that we hear; but being yet Novices in virtue, we should make choice of a Master or spiritual Father, that we may follow his guidance, and discover all our thoughts and actions to him. CHAP. IV.

The holy Scripture also, and other pious Books are to be read with humility, simplicity, and faith; not to the end we may appear learned, but that we may be instructed in the spirit; seeing we cannot learn all things of our spiritual Master. CHAP. V.

The man that is a Novice in spiritual things, allured by the novelty and pleasure of reading, gives himself wholly to it, as tho' perfection depended upon that principally. Hence he is discompos'd, and feels regret, if his Director opposes this inordinate inclination of his. But he soon perceives that perfection is not to be plac'd in much reading, but in mortifying his own will: And he surmounts

furmounts this temptation by submission, and by an humble opinion of himself. CHAP. VI.

Being deliver'd by the help of his spiritual Father from his first temptation, he immediately falls into another which is more dangerous; for being unmindful of the divine grace, he places all his hope in his spiritual Father; flattering himself, that with such a Guide he must needs be in the direct way to perfection. But because, generally speaking, spiritual Fathers, as men devoted to God, appear vile and abject to the world, the enemy suggests to the Novice, that it is no way reasonable, that a person of his quality, estate, learning, wisdom, &c. should upon all occasions thus apply to, and consult a spiritual Father. This temptation hath seduc'd many. CHAP. VII.

This being surmounted, a third temptation succeeds; namely, to discover all his good thoughts and actions, not only to his spiritual Father, but to every body; and thus the Novice loses by too much talk what he had gain'd by silence. CHAP. VIII.

The spiritual Father earnestly thwarts the Novice in this affair; others commend him; from whence a fourth temptation rises up against him; namely, to change his spiritual Father, whom he finds opposing him; nay,

may, and the place too, and the exercises. But this temptation is to be overcome by renouncing his own judgment, and by despising all other instructions that are not approved by the Director. CHAP. IX.

From an irksomeness and regret occasion'd the Novice by the opposition of his Director, he is turn'd the quite contrary way, by another temptation which is the fifth in order; and he that before seem'd wholly given up to divine things, talks now of nothing but of worldly affairs and secular matters; and therein seeks consolation and delight. But he must be call'd off by his Director from those matters and consolations, which are a great hindrance to divine comforts; and be employ'd in prayer, and variety of devout exercises, lest he pass away his time idly and unprofitably: It would be a mighty furtherance also of his spiritual growth, to converse much with such persons as sequester and apply themselves to the like study of perfection. CHAP. X.

III. *A desire to overcome his Passions.*

He that continues thus engaged in worldly affairs, and intermeddles in other people's concerns, under pretence of an honest

nest zeal for the spiritual good of others, postpones the care of himself, and goes backward in the Christian Life. This is the case of many religious persons, who were more holy and fervent at the beginning of their conversion, than after many years profession of a religious life. Wherefore he that would proceed in the Spiritual Life, must not sit down contented with external observances only, but must use his utmost endeavours perfectly to overcome his passions, and desire to advance daily in virtue and self-denial. CHAP. XI.

Against the man, that seems heartily to pursue virtue and proficiencie, many enemies soon rise up, conceiving a sinister opinion of him; which is not only useful to him, but even necessary: For he becomes thereby more humble and diligent in removing occasions of offence and reproach; and is under a sort of necessity of having more frequent recourse to God. CHAP. XII.

Nor do Men only vex us, but the Devil also torments and persecutes us with continual temptations, which are hugely beneficial to the Novice; for by these he is humbled, purify'd, and instructed, to the end, that through many tribulations and temptations he may enter into the Kingdom
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of God, as many Saints have enter'd; some of which were tempted at the beginning of their conversion, others at the end; some again all their life long; some more fiercely, others more lightly; some having surmounted great temptations, have been foiled by flight ones; that being thus humbled, they might never presume upon their own strength, but manfully resist the beginning of a temptation, not by flight only, or by a severe and boisterous treatment of themselves, but by patience, and perseverance, together with the divine aid, and the counsel of their Director, who will not deal roughly with him that is tempted; but gently and kindly, and as he would wish to be treated himself, if he were in the like circumstances. CHAP. XIII.

The greatest and commonest of these temptations, is the depending upon our own judgment; and the refusing to submit to the judgment and will of another. CHAP. XIV.

IV. A resolution not to commit any the least sin, upon any consideration whatsoever.

Yet we must so trust the judgment of another, as not out of compliance to commit

mit any sin, tho' never so light and venial; tho' good works may sometimes be omitted for a good end, or rather exchanged for better. Therefore he that truly and earnestly desires to vanquish his passions, must take up a firm resolution upon no account to commit a sin, whether mortal, or venial. CHAP. XV.

What shall he do therefore, if he discerns in himself, or in another, some evil which he is not able to conquer in himself, nor to amend in the other, after once or twice admonishing? He ought to bear it patiently, till God see fit to order it otherwise. CHAP. XVI.

And to live as a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, and to become a fool for the sake of *Christ*. CHAP. XVII.

As all the Saints lived, whose lives and conversations he ought diligently to call to mind, and to imitate their examples; which consist principally in three things. CHAP. XVIII.

First, That the soul acquiesce not in the bare external appearance of virtue, but that a man study the exercise and practice of all virtues, by beginning anew every day, and frequently examining his Life. CHAP. XIX.

Secondly,

Secondly, That he seek times to retire, and converse with himself; that he fly unnecessary conversation, idle gadding about, news and reports, and give himself to meditation, and the reading of pious Books.
CHAP. XX.

V. *The Fear of God, and Compunction of Heart.*

Thirdly, That he preserve the fear of GOD upon his mind, by flying human mirth, and seeking compunction of heart: Which is acquired by four considerations.
CHAP. XXI.

First, That of human misery, and of the sins that we have committed. CHAP. XXII.

Secondly, Of death. CHAP. XXIII.

Thirdly, By the consideration of the final Judgment, and of the pains of Hell.
CHAP. XXIV.

Fourthly, By considering the ultimate end of a Christian; and above all other things the consideration of the life and passion of *Christ*, will be most helpful; nor need a man look out for any more effectual.
CHAP. XXV.

* In the Latin: *The pains of Hell, as well as those of Purgatory.*

B O O K II.

Wherein the progress, and ultimate end, or perfection of the *Purgative Life* is explain'd.

VI. *A Hatred of the World.*

NEXT to compunction of heart, a man ought to seek an internal converse with God, looking upon himself as a stranger and pilgrim upon earth. Whereupon the men of the world, seeing themselves abandon'd, revile and persecute the Disciple of *Christ*, that hath dedicated himself to a Spiritual Life. CHAP. I.

Who ought not to value this opposition, nor anxiously to defend himself, but to wait the divine protection; by bearing all with humble submission, and esteeming himself the vilest of all men. CHAP. II.

VII. *Patience in Injuries.*

Nor should he trouble himself about reconciling, and pacifying others, till he hath pacify'd himself, and establish'd a calm in
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his own bosom; which he shall do by patiently bearing whatsoever is done against him. CHAP. III.

Patience is acquir'd by regarding with a pure and simple heart whatsoever is done or said against us. Simplicity of intention considers God only, without regard to any thing else. Purity of heart seeks nothing but the good pleasure of God; whence it comes to pass, that he suffers patiently whatsoever God either does or permits. CHAP. IV.

That a man may bear patiently the trouble that others give him, let him consider what trouble he gives to them; and let him regard himself principally, and not mind what others do. CHAP. V.

By placing his peace and satisfaction, not in the breath of others, but in a good Conscience. CHAP. VI.

VIII. *The Love of Jesus Christ.*

By seeking nothing in this world, besides the love of *Jesus Christ*. CHAP. VII.

For with *Jesus* we have every good; without him we want all things, tho' we gain the whole world. CHAP. VIII.

Nor ought the love of *Christ* to grow faint

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in us, tho' divine consolations should sometimes be withdrawn from us. CHAP. IX.

This Love appears in its greatest strength and lustre, when we had rather suffer with *Christ*, than enjoy consolations; carry the Cross, than live in ease and plenty: When we accept every thing from GOD's hand with evenness and equality of mind, and are alike thankful amidst stripes and comforts. CHAP. X.

But it commonly falls out much otherwise: For generally men love and serve *Jesus Christ* in consolation and prosperity, but seldom in adversity and upon the Cross. But a true servant of *Christ* praises and blesses GOD in both conditions equally. CHAP. XI.

IX. *A desire of Mortification, and of the Cross.*

Because he is persuaded, that the perfection and happiness of a Christian consists in mortification, and in the imitation of *Christ* in bearing the Cross: Wherefore he purposes by the Grace of God to carry it even unto death. CHAP. XII.

B O O K III.

Wherein is treated of the *Illumi-
native Way.*

I. *A Desire of Prayer.*

HE that is arriv'd to such a degree of perfection, as to be willing to carry his Cross after *Christ*, ought before all other things to have an ardent *zeal for Prayer*, wherein he will hear what the Lord saith within him. CHAP. I.

Who teaches without the noise of words the manner of serving him aright; for men speak to the ears, but GOD speaks to the heart. CHAP. II.

II. *Humility.*

Whilst God talketh with the soul, there is excited in her, in the next place, a strong disposition to *Humility*; whereby a man acknowledges himself rude and ignorant in divine things; and desires to be illuminated more and more by the Spirit of God; and is confounded to think that the men of the

world should be so diligent and earnest in pursuing the things of the world; and a servant of God so indifferent and listless in his service. Whereupon follows an acknowledgment of his own vileness and misery, and a serious and earnest imploring of the divine Grace. CHAP. III.

III. *Purity*

This being obtain'd by Prayer, there presently follows another holy disposition; that is, *Purity of Heart*, whereby he becomes a lover of the truth, which gives him a knowledge of his sins, and causes him to bewail them, to make no account of his own works, to despise earthly things, and to love heavenly. He that is arriv'd at this estate, desires to have his defects made known, and in a manner to be pointed at as a Sinner, and an imperfect Christian. CHAP. IV.

IV. *The Love of God.*

Which desire is immediately followed with a strong spiritual Consolation, where-with a man animated bursts out into a fourth affection, *viz.* of a vehement *Love of God,*

GOD, the effects whereof he experiences and feels in himself: The principal of which is, gladly to embrace all hardships, and to suffer with joy the most grievous things for the sake of his beloved. CHAP. IV, V.

Then follows *the Trial and Probation of this Love*; great desolation, various temptations, spiritual languors, and sometimes the falling into some sin, but of frailty rather than malice: All which things seem to happen by God's permission, lest a man should pride himself in the consolations he hath receiv'd. CHAP. VI.

V. *A Hatred of himself, and desire of Penitence.*

As well from the preceding consolation, as from lapsing into sin, springs a fifth affection; viz. *a Hatred of himself, and a desire of suffering many things for the sake of Christ*; which, unless it be restrained by the discretion of the Director, sometimes proves pernicious. CHAP. VII.

Which correction he ought to receive with submission and humility; esteeming himself (what he really is) dust and ashes, created out of nothing, and to be turned
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again into earth; who, left to himself, instantly falls; but being lifted up by God, is immediately strengthened, and stands upright. CHAP. VIII.

But if, neglecting the advice of his Director, he be excessive in the rigours of Penance and corporal severities, he shall not attain to true repose of heart, nor to perfection; he shall remain in a state of dryness and barrenness; he shall fall into pride and anxiety, and affliction of spirit. Many spiritual persons have dash'd upon this rock, and this hath been the cause of their non-proficiency. But he that submits to his Director, and proposes to himself God alone, and his will, as his only scope, arrogates no merit to himself from good works, and enjoys a profound peace and tranquillity of spirit. CHAP. VII, and IX.

He is replenish'd with consolations, and inflamed anew with the passion of Love, from the consideration of the benefits of God, of the divine charity, and of his preceding lapse; esteeming it a mighty favour, that he is admitted to the privilege of serving God, not in things pleasing to himself, but to God. CHAP. X.

VI. *A Desire of accomplishing the divine Will.*

Now follows the sixth affection of *seeking the sole will of GOD*; by acquiescing entirely in his ordination: For not every inclination, that seemeth good, is to be pursued; nor every inclination, that seemeth evil, rashly and at first sight to be rejected; but both are to be examin'd and regulated by the divine will. CHAP. XI.

From whence arises no small struggle of the inner Man, to whom the life of the lovers of the world seems pleasanter and happier, because it is free from all struggles and combats of this nature, and has the enjoyment of sundry delights and pleasures. But GOD giveth to understand, that the men of the world have no solid satisfaction; which is to be found in GOD only, and in a contempt of all human things. Hereupon some are attack'd with strong carnal temptations, partly from the consideration of wordly delights, partly from the internal combats of the Spirit. CHAP. XII.

VII. *Obedience.*

Which temptations are overcome by the
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seventh affection of *Obedience*, not only to the will of GOD, but also to all our governours; yea, and to all men, to whom a man becomes so submissive, as to be willing they should walk over him, and trample him as the very dirt of the streets. CHAP. XIII.

For how is it possible for a man to lift himself up above any one, who shall contemplate the secret judgments of GOD, the fall of the Angels, the surprizing lapses and miscarriages of men, and his own personal vileness? CHAP. XIV.

VIII. *Indifference in all things.*

Rather he will fear all things, even those which may seem right and good in his own eyes, by considering that many have been deceived in the end, who at first thought themselves under the influence and conduct of a good Spirit: From whence he passes to the eighth disposition, *viz. of Indifference in all things*, and accordingly desires nothing of GOD absolutely, but conditionally. *Lord, if it be thy good pleasure, grant me this request: Give me what thou wilt; as much as thou wilt, and when thou wilt: Grant me*
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to die unto all things that are in the world; to welcome scorn and contempt for thy sake; to rest in thee; and to have peace in thee only. CHAP. XV.

From this indifference follows great peace of soul, and perpetual consolation: Which not the creatures, but the Creator alone is able to give. CHAP. XVI.

But all of a sudden the adversary suggests fundry thoughts: *What if this or that should befall thee?* To which the spiritual Man must give no heed, but return to his indifference and unconcernedness, and be as ready always to suffer, as to rejoice. CHAP. XVII.

To which he is excited by the example of *Christ*, which the Saints of the *Old Testament* had not the advantage of: And by the hopes of a future and spiritual Kingdom, which they had but a dark and dim conception of. CHAP. XVIII.

Then by the permission of GOD occasions of suffering offer themselves: He is loaded with injuries and reproaches; he is falsely accused; but he is taught of GOD to bear all things patiently from all men. CHAP. XIX.

The man finding himself unequal to such trials, implores the divine aid to enable him

him to stand the numerous and powerful assaults of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. CHAP. XX.

Suddenly he feels the abundant consolations of GOD, wherewith his soul ravished, desires to rest in GOD alone, and bids adieu to all things else, even the most spiritual. CHAP. XXI.

He renders thanks to GOD, not only for benefits and graces receiv'd, but for those also which he hath not receiv'd; because he accounts it a singular mercy, not to have many of those shining qualities and advantages, which outwardly and to the eye of the world, appear glorious, and worthy of praise and admiration: And this is the greatest perfection of true indifference. CHAP. XXII.

IX. *Perfect Peace.*

A perfect indifference as to all things being obtain'd, we must next seek true *Peace* and liberty, which we shall attain, 1. By studying to do another's will, rather than our own. 2. By preferring a moderate fortune before abundance. 3. By seeking the lowermost place, and being subject and obedient to all. 4. By constantly wishing
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and praying, that the will of God may be perfectly fulfilled in us. Various and manifold temptations oppose themselves against these four things that bring Peace. Where with the man finding himself oppress'd, flies to God for succour, begs him to draw up all his affections, and fix them upon heavenly things, to the end that having once tasted celestial sweets, he may have a disdain and loathing of earthly things.

CHAP. XXIII.

God immediately is present with his aid, and suggests effectual remedies against the first temptation, *viz.* to shun all curious enquiry into the life and conversation of others: Not to be concern'd for the shadow of a great name; nor for a numerous acquaintance; nor for the private love and affection of men. For these things are great hindrances to *our doing the will of another*, and exceedingly disturb our peace.

CHAP. XXIV.

Wherefore he must direct his whole intention and aim to the pleasing of God alone, and must neither desire, nor seek any thing out of, or besides him: He must judge himself, and never put a rash censure upon other people's words or actions: Nor intermeddle in matters that nothing con-

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cern him: And by this means he may easily do *another's will*, and pass his life with few or light troubles; for to escape trouble altogether, is not consistent with the nature of our present condition, but is the state of that place, where evils enter not. CHAP. XXV.

Against the second disposition, which brought peace, *viz. of preferring a moderate fortune before abundance*, there arises soon after, by the permission of GOD, and sometimes by the procurement of the Devil, a second temptation, namely, an excessive carking and solicitude about the necessities of the body, meat, drink, clothes, &c. This occasions great disturbance and perplexity; since it is not lawful to cast away all, because nature must be supported; nor to look out for delicacies and superfluities, because this the divine Law forbids: Wherefore to observe a due medium between the extremes, is very difficult. CHAP. XXVI.

This temptation is surmounted by rooting out of the heart all desire, not only of estate and wealth, but also of honour and vain applause; after which it is easy to reduce one's self to a mediocrity. The man craves of GOD this purity of heart, and heavenly wisdom, to incline him to love
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GOD above all things; and as for the creatures, to regard them as they are in themselves; and according to that order wherein Providence hath plac'd them. CHAP. XXVII.

Against the third disposition, *viz. of seeking the lowermost place, and of being subject and obedient to all*, there arises a third temptation: That is, many set themselves against this spiritual humble man, and think and speak ill of him: Which temptation he will easily get over, by thinking worse of himself, than any one else can, and by believing none weaker than himself; and by not placing his peace in the tongues of men, but in the approbation of GOD. CHAP. XXVIII.

Against the fourth disposition, *viz. of constantly wishing and praying, that the will of GOD may be perfectly fulfilled in us*, there arises a very sore and powerful temptation, (possibly of the flesh) whereby a man is strongly possess'd, that tho' he would never so fain, yet it is impossible for him perfectly to do the will of GOD: Which temptation he alone is able to bear with constancy and equality of mind, who is entirely resigned, and sincerely desirous that the will of GOD (even in this temptation)

tion) may be perfectly accomplish'd in him. CHAP. XXIX.

A man attack'd with this temptation ought immediately to have recourse to God by Prayer, and to persevere therein in full assurance of faith, without seeking human consolations; for it is expedient for him to suffer these things: Wherefore he ought to render thanks for them, yea, to rejoice in this affliction: And thus doing, he shall not lose peace, neither in this, nor in any the like temptation. CHAP. XXX.

X. *Liberty of Spirit.*

Peace being acquir'd, there follows to be obtain'd a full Liberty of mounting freely unto *Christ*, and of resting in him, without any check or retardment from the creatures; without which all the knowledge, and all the good qualities, which a man may otherwise have, are of no great weight or value. CHAP. XXXI.

This liberty is compriz'd in one only word: *Quit all things, and thou shalt find all things: Let go Desire, and thou shalt lay hold of Peace:* In this consists, the whole perfection of persons dedicated and devoted

devoted to religion: For he that absolutely renounces the love of himself, and submits entirely to the obedience of GOD's commands, and those of his Superior, passes his whole life in joy, and in perfect Liberty of Spirit. But in order to a due and regular resignation of all things, these two things are necessary. CHAP. XXXII.

First, That he direct the whole intention of his mind, to one right and excellent end, by seeking the highest honour and glory of GOD alone in all things, without the least spice and blemish of self-love. By this method his heart will remain unmov'd and unshaken, amidst the various dispositions and postures of mind, to which we are necessarily subject in this life; from whence it comes to pass, that we are sometimes chearful, sometimes melancholy; sometimes sedate and calm, at other times clouded and confus'd; this hour devout and fervent, the next lukewarm and cold; to day grave and serious, to morrow light and trifling. CHAP. XXXIII.

When he has rectify'd all the movements and inclinations of his heart by the purity of his intention God-ward, then is he come to enjoy great consolation, and to taste and relish the sweetness of those words: *My*
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GOD, *and all things*. All things are agreeable and of grateful relish to him for the sake of GOD: But GOD himself is so relishing to the palate of his soul, that he desires to cleave unto him with all his powers and faculties, and with ravishments and ecstasies of joy, and longs for that blessed hour when GOD shall be unto him *All in All*. But this consolation is disturb'd and interrupted by the old Man, who is not yet wholly crucify'd, nor perfectly dead; who lusteth strongly against the Spirit, raiseth wars in the region within, and suffers not this purity of intention towards GOD to continue firm and stable, but assaults, and endeavours to overthrow it by the batteries of fundry temptations, and various affections, CHAP. XXXIV.

This combat, and these temptations put him in great fear of forfeiting the true Liberty of the sons of GOD: But he is to be supported, and inform'd, that the true Liberty of this life consists not in quiet, and in an exemption from temptations, but in the conquest of them, and in a disposition freely and chearfully to sustain for the sake of *Christ*, labours, sorrows, temptations, vexations, anxieties, necessities, infirmities, injuries, reproaches, reprehensions, humiliations,

liations, confusions, chastisements. This was the lot and portion of the Saints.

CHAP. XXXV.

And as the Man desires to suffer these things for the sake of *Christ*, so to confirm and fortify this desire in him; by the permission of God, some murmur against him, others think hardly of him, others load him with calumnies and reproaches. And no wonder, since St. *Paul* himself could not please all, but defended himself with the shield of patience and humility: And if at any time he made answer to his accusers, he did it, that his silence might not become an occasion of scandal to the weak.

CHAP. XXXVI.

For all those contradictions and difficulties are best overcome, not by a contentious defence of himself, but by renouncing himself and all things; not partially, nor sometimes, but absolutely, and always: Whence it will follow, that having a right intention towards God, we shall be free and disengaged from all created things.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Next to a right intention, the second thing necessary to the obtaining the liberty of the sons of God, is, to use all exterior things, as they were ordained by God,

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who hath left nothing in his whole creation disorderly, or unordain'd to some worthy end. And that a man may not be deceiv'd by the outward appearance of things, and so embrace what he ought to reject; or reject what he ought to embrace; as soon as ever any good work or action presents itself to the mind, we must retire into the tabernacle of our heart, to consult God about such or such a thing, if we would not be deceiv'd; even as *Joshua* was deceiv'd by the *Gibeonites*, because he gave too easy credit to the smooth, flattering speeches of his enemies, and deluded by a pretended piety, engaged in a league, without first asking counsel at the mouth of the Lord.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

And when we have done what reason dictated, obedience commanded, and all that was in the power of our hands to do, we must commit the whole affair to God, so as without any anxiety, and with great tranquillity of spirit, to wait such an issue of the thing, as he in his providence shall think fit to give it.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Which whosoever doth, is forthwith wonderfully replenished with divine consolations, and acknowledges how vain and unstable man is in all his desires; that God is good,

good, just, and holy, and doth all things well, justly, and holily, disposing them in wisdom, and conducting all affairs committed to him to the best issue. But howsoever things succeed, prosperously or crossly, we must guard against temptation: For if they take a happy turn, there arises up against us, from the success, a temptation to vain glory, and a desire of human praise: Which is master'd by the consideration of our own vileness, whereby a man is disposed to glory in God alone; and as to himself, in nothing, save only in his infirmities; so as that all praise, honour, and glory, may be ascrib'd to God alone. CHAP. XL.

But on the other hand, if at any time, God so disposing, affairs meet with an unfortunate issue; and by the event of things thou thy self fallest into contempt and abasement, whilst others are elevated and great in reputation; thou oughtest to lift up thy heart to Heaven, and to unite thy self unto God by means of this absolute liberty of spirit; and two things contribute to this union.

I. Thou oughtest not to be afflicted because thou art despised of men, but to be humbled, and to think, that to thee all manner of confusion and contempt is justly

due; but to GOD, praise, honour, and glory; because unless thou prepare thy self cheerfully to suffer shame and confusion from all, and to be despised by every creature, thou art in no condition to enjoy GOD fully and completely. CHAP. XLI.

II. Flee to GOD; for he that has not yet learnt to recur immediately to GOD in all things, as *Moses* did to the Tabernacle; applies himself for comfort in these difficulties, either to friends or to books, forgetting GOD: But for friends, they often abandon a man in tribulation or disgrace, or at least die. Wherefore the spiritual man must have recourse to the ever living and abiding Truth. CHAP. XLII.

As for Books, in whose refin'd maxims, and sparkling sentences, he may expect to find a relief and solace of his pains, these, without GOD, are vain comforters. *For the Kingdom of GOD is not in word, but in power.* For it is GOD, who teaches perfectly, and in an instant, to despise earthly things, to seek things eternal, to fly honours, to bear injuries, and to place his whole hope and trust in him alone. CHAP. XLIII.

He must have recourse therefore to GOD as well in prosperity as adversity; looking
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upon himself as dead upon earth, and as one to whom all the world is crucify'd; passing by many things with a deaf ear; avoiding strife and contentious words; and cheerfully bearing temporal losses. CHAP. XLIV.

In which respect he will learn by experience, that a faithful friend is hard to find; that stands by a man in all his pressures; that GOD alone is most faithful at all times, and in all circumstances, and that none is like unto him. CHAP. XLV.

Nay, that friends in the day of affliction turn enemies, and in word and deed persecute the servant of GOD: Who if he refuse to be humbled, and to be put to shame and confusion, is neither a true friend of GOD, nor truly dead to the world, nor the world crucify'd to him. For the righteous will not be confounded, whatever befalls him from the hand of GOD. Tho' a thing be alledg'd unjustly against him, he will not matter it much: Nor on the other hand will he be lifted up with vain joy, if others justify him, and clear his innocence; for he fears the judgment of GOD alone. CHAP. XLVI.

For all these difficulties will soon pass away, and a day will come which is known unto the Lord, wherein the just shall enjoy

everlasting consolations, as the Saints do at present. CHAP. XLVII.

II. *A Desire of eternal Bliss.*

Perfect liberty obtain'd, the Soul from an unspeakable consolation and complacency flowing thence, desires to be loosed from the bands of the flesh, and to be united eternally to GOD. CHAP. XLVIII.

For which desire and consolation he ought to render his hearty and humble thanks to GOD, and to acknowledge that he receives not this blessing by any thought or endeavour of his own, but by the pure vouchsafement of supernal grace, and divine indulgence, in order to prepare him for future combats. But because this desire of death is not pure and unmix'd, but tinctur'd and adulterated with self-love, therefore he is taught to desire and pray for, not what is delightful and pleasing to himself, but what is acceptable to GOD, and tending to his honour; that is, that whether by life or death, affliction or consolation, GOD may be always glorify'd. CHAP. XLIX.

This desire therefore is ever and anon followed with a great inward desolation, and a suitable outward humiliation: Which the

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man bears with an humble patience, acknowledging it to be for his soul's health, and accordingly gives God thanks for it.

CHAP. L.

The soul thus humbled God comforts, giving her to understand, why he sometimes seems to desert her, and refuses to admit her to a familiar converse with him at pleasure; and what exercises of Charity and Humility she ought at such seasons to attend. CHAP. LI.

The soul ravish'd with this consolation, does not only, as before, render thanks for her humiliation, but looks upon herself as unworthy of every divine benefit and consolation: Nor does she any longer wish, as before, for happiness, and to be loosed from the chains of the body; but earnestly craves space for repentance, and to bewail her sins.

CHAP. LII.

12. *A Desire of Solitude, and a Contempt of all created things.*

Soon after God conducts the soul to Solitude, calling her away from her acquaintance, and from her dearest friends, and commands her, in order to enjoy the

divine embraces, to bid adieu to all earthly consolations; and to wean her mind from every temporal solace; but above all things to detest self-love. CHAP. LIII.

In this Solitude, the passions now calm'd and hush'd, the movements of nature and grace are clearly perceiv'd, which God teaches to distinguish; to the end nature may be subdued, and grace encrease. CHAP. LIV.

But the motions of nature, which from the law of sin rise up strong against him, man is not able by his own single strength, but by the assistance alone of divine grace, to vanquish and overcome: Wherefore in comparison of the grace of God, he despises riches, arts, strength, wit; yea, and all supernatural gifts, of prophecy, working of miracles, and the like; and craves with an importunate and ardent desire of soul, the grace of God, and nothing else. CHAP. LV.

13. *The Desire of the Cross.*

But because we arrive at grace through *Christ*, who is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, who by the Cross ascended unto the

the Father; the soul does not only embrace the Cross, but most earnestly and passionately desires it; to the end the servant may be exercised in the Life and Cross of her Lord. CHAP. LVI.

During which exercise, a man pleases God more by suffering adversities with humility and patience (being thereby render'd more conformable to the suffering and patient *Jesus*) than by abounding in devotion and consolation in prosperity: And if he cannot always bear adversities joyfully, let him bear them patiently at least, sending up earnest prayers to God for perseverance. CHAP. LVII.

He that is arriv'd at this highest pitch of perfection, is wont to be assaulted with divers afflicting thoughts; Why this man, that studies perfection, is gone back; whilst another hath made a considerable progress: Why one man is afflicted, another exalted: Which of the Saints is happier than others in the Kingdom of Heaven, which less so. These thoughts he ought to banish, by reflecting upon himself, and his own sins, with a piercing grief for being so far remov'd from the life and virtue of the Saints. CHAP. LVIII.

14. *Hope in the alone Grace and Mercy of GOD.*

Finally, to what degree of perfection soever thou art come, thou must place thy whole hope in the sole Grace and Mercy of GOD; and chuse rather to be a pilgrim upon earth with *Christ*, than to possess Heaven without him. CHAP. LIX.

B O O K IV.

Wherein is treated of *Union* with God; which is effected by the reception of the holy Eucharist.

I. *The remote Preparation.*

TO the end we may be perfectly united unto GOD by means of the venerable Sacrament of the Eucharist, a threefold preparation is required: The first, *remote*; the second, *more immediate*; the third, *conjoin'd* with the reception itself. The *remote* consists, *First*, in the acknowledgment of our own vileness, and in a most profound

profound reverence of *Christ* present in the Eucharist. CHAP. I.

Secondly, In a sense of our own imperfections, and in thanksgivings for so signal a benefit. CHAP. II.

Thirdly, In an ardent Desire of receiving *Christ* into the habitation of our heart. CHAP. III.

Which is excited by the consideration of the benefit and extraordinary blessings accruing to us by the reception of the Eucharist. CHAP. IV.

Yet this preparation alone is not sufficient, tho' it be especially convenient for the Priest that celebrates often. CHAP. V.

But besides this, another more immediate disposition is necessary, as well for the Communicant, as for him that celebrates; which consists also in three things. CHAP. VI.

II. *The more immediate Preparation.*

First, In the discussion of our own Conscience, in a Sacramental Confession of our sins, and in a purpose of amendment. CHAP. VII.

Secondly, In an oblation of ourselves, and a total resignation to the will of God; even as *Christ*, with arms extended upon
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the Cross, and body naked, offer'd up himself for our sins to GOD the Father.

CHAP. VIII.

The Praxis, or form and manner of this oblation is describ'd and set down,

CHAP. IX.

Thirdly, In an ardent desire not only of Communicating, but of Communicating frequently: Which desire the enemy endeavours to damp and extinguish by divers and fundry temptations, scruples and difficulties. But he is not to be hearken'd to, because delay and deferring does no good, but abundance of hurt. CHAP. X.

For this is the super-excellent food of the soul; in which is *Christ* himself, whom the Angels adore in Heaven, but hid under the Sacramental Elements, to the end our eyes may be able to bear his brightness, and Majesty. CHAP. XI.

III. *The conjunct Preparation.*

The last and utmost Preparation is joyn'd with the Communion itself, and consists likewise in three things.

First, In calling off and disengaging the soul from all other thoughts, and affairs: A means whereof will be, to gain and preserve
a re-

a recollection of spirit, not only before the holy Communion, but after it also; so that one Communion may be a preparation for another: A thing not to be obtain'd by a man's own industry, virtue, or merit, but by the grace of GOD. CHAP. XII.

This grace the man ardently craves of GOD; namely, to be perfectly united unto GOD, to be swallowed up in him, and wholly and entirely to forget himself: CHAP. XIII.

In the same manner as some Saints and devout Souls have with great devotion and affection approach'd this Sacrament, who with mouth, heart, and body at once have gaped and panted after it, being no otherwise able to moderate nor satiate their hunger, but by receiving the body of *Christ* with all imaginable delight and spiritual greediness. CHAP. XIV.

The *Second* thing consists in seeking the grace of devotion earnestly; in waiting for it patiently, and confidently; in receiving it thankfully; in preserving it humbly; in co-operating with it diligently; and in permitting the time and measure of the supernatural visitation to the will of GOD: Who frequently gives this grace in an instant, after having denied it a long time: And sometimes

times at the end of prayer, sometimes at the beginning: Nor does he seem to wait for any other preparation of soul to qualify us for it, but this; namely, that we perfectly submit, and resign up our selves to him with the whole bent of our heart, and empty our selves of all created things.
CHAP. XV.

And because it is not in man to put himself into this most gracious disposition, he implores it earnestly of God, and begs him to refresh the bowels of a poor famished Beggar; to inflame his frozen, benumbed soul with the fire of his love; to illuminate his blindness with the shine of his presence: To turn all earthly things into bitterness unto him; all crosses and afflictions into patience; all things here below, and things created, into contempt and oblivion; and to seize his whole heart, and to carry it away with him into Heaven.
CHAP. XVI.

The *Third* thing consists in bursting forth into a most passionate love, wherewith the soul inflamed, desires to Communicate with the same disposition with which any of the Saints have ever communicated; yea, with the most devout resentments that the mind of man is capable of conceiving, or desiring:
With

With the same affection, reverence, praise and honour; with the same gratitude, worthiness, and love; with the same faith, hope, purity, and humility, with which the blessed Virgin *Mary* receiv'd the divine Salutation in the mystery of the Incarnation: With the same alacrity, wherewith St. *John* in the womb, and afterwards at *Jordan* receiv'd *Jesus*: With an oblation of all the transports, the devout affections, raptures and ecstasies, supernal illuminations, and heavenly visions; of all the virtues and praises, that have been, or shall be exhibited unto GOD, as well in Heaven as in earth. CHAP. XVII.

This mighty love is followed with a violent temptation of penetrating the highest mysteries, whereby many have made shipwreck of their devotion; whilst they have attempted to fathom the deep things of GOD. But this temptation being surmounted by faith and humility, GOD communicates himself to the soul in such abundance, in such a profusion of the riches of his grace, and unites himself so intimately unto it; that St. *Paul* thereupon is forc'd to cry out; *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither have enter'd into the heart of man, the things which GOD hath prepared*

pared for them that love him^a. And for this reason, it were a weakness to go about to explain the effects wrought by God in a soul perfectly united unto him by love. It may suffice to have pointed out, how, and by what means a man may arrive at this perfect Union. CHAP. XVIII.

A brief COMPENDIUM of the Doctrine of these Books; written in Latin by Achilles Gagliardus of Patavia, and thus translated.

Spiritual perfection consists in two things, one of which is an entire self-denial, or absolute renouncing of a man's self; the other, the highest possible conformity with, and complacence in, the good pleasure and will of God. In order to a perfect self-denial, or total renouncing of a man's self, our Author requires all these things.

I. That we wholly renounce all the things of the world, that are without us;

^a 1 Cor. ii. 9.

that we despise all things; that we lean or depend upon nothing; that we be inveigled or captivated by nothing; that we bring all things whatsoever into perfect subjection to ourselves; that we mind not what others do; nor be at all anxious about future events; that we seek consolation from no creature; that we commit all things wholly to GOD; and as GOD is the happiness of all things, so that we refer all things to him, as their original source and spring.

II. He lays down the necessity of mortifying the flesh, and of governing all the passions, but especially that of self-love, the inordinancy whereof is the fountain of all disquiet.

III. He prescribes and inculcates over and over again the knowledge, and the utmost possible contempt of ourselves, whereby we may love to be unknown, and to be despis'd by all; may be inclin'd to esteem ourselves the greatest of all sinners; may always increase in holy fear and compunction for our sins; be ready to do well, and to suffer evil; to bow and subject ourselves to all for GOD's sake; to think ourselves much worse than we ourselves are able to conceive: The lower we descend in humiliation, and self-abasement, so much the
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higher he asserts, we ascend Godward. Finally, he would have us be annihilated in a manner, and reduc'd to nothing, since of our selves we are nothing, and tend to nothing: Yea, he affirms, that the Saints in Glory, the higher they are, the lower they fall in their humble prostrations before the divine Majesty; wherefore we read in the *Revelations*, that they cast their Crowns to the ground, fall down before GOD, and worship.

IV. He frequently teaches that our own will, over and above all these things, must be utterly denied; and that too (which may seem strange) not in human inclinations only by humble subjection and obedience, but also in many holy desires; wherein there many times lurks an inordinate love of our selves; and from this occasion he delivers many profound, and even divine doctrines, about the rejecting of consolations, about the embracing of desertions, and about the discerning of spirits, or the distinguishing of good from evil suggestions.

V. Summing up all these particulars into one head, he is often wont to use such forms of expression as these: *Quit all things, and thou shalt find all things: Give all for*

for all: Leave thyself, and thou shalt find me: Strip thy self of all propriety: Nakedly follow naked Jesus: So much as thou art able to go out of thy self, so much wilt thou be enabled to pass into me: And the like.

VI. Hereupon, that is, upon this entire self-denial depends (he says) and springs up true peace of mind, quiet, liberty of spirit, self-recollection and internal converse with God, singleness of heart, and lastly, purity of intention, and sincere affection towards divine things; which are the two wings, as it were, by which the soul mounts up to God.

VII. That all these things are acquir'd and compassed by the victory of himself, and that violence, which the Kingdom of Heaven suffers; viz. by a holy observance of its laws, an observance (he says) not only external, but much more, internal; by the pulling up and extirpating not vices only; but their very roots and causes; finally, by patience, long-suffering, humble subjection to superiors, watching and prayer. And so much for self-denial.

Next, for the divine good pleasure; in the exalting of which he is every where almost wholly taken up: For he would have it the constant subject of our wishes; the

scope of all our actions; the sole foundation and ground of our self-denial: He would have us beg to understand it, and to pray that God himself would teach us to do his will in all things; (for the more difficult this is to us, so much the easier is it to God;) to place our whole desire in the good pleasure of God; fully and entirely to acquiesce in the will of the beloved; to be gather'd up into God alone; to be perfectly conform'd to his judgment; to love him so sincerely, that nothing may give us joy but the will of God, and this much more than his benefits, by loving the giver far more vehemently than the gifts; to resign our selves entirely to God's disposals to do in us, and with us, freely and indifferently, whatsoever pleases him; not to place perfection in much devotion; but in making an oblation of our selves to the divine good pleasure; and when consolation is withdrawn, to solace our selves in God's will, and righteous probation of us; to submit absolutely to God, and to rectify our own crookedness and depravity by the divine will; to move and walk at the beck of God, without the least contradiction or complaint. From all which dispositions in their highest exaltation, the soul is rapt into an ecstasy, and by a certain ineffable transport

transport forsakes her self and all created things; her will is elevated and transformed into the divine will; she transcends all comprehension by an inflam'd love; finally, rests in God above all even spiritual things, soaring beyond every creature, every good, every gift and grace. And so much for the skill and contrivance of our matchless Author.

Of the necessity of a Guide in our Christian Pilgrimage; with a Prayer to Christ to enable us to follow him; By Jacob Horstius.

THE christian traveller hath a long and tedious journey still to finish. For he is in his way from a far remote region to his own country, even from earth to Heaven. He has need therefore of a faithful and skilful Guide to conduct him in the way. But behold, there is here present not some ^ason of *Ananias* the great, or the Angel *Raphael* from Heaven to go along with *Tobias*; but the Lord of Angels, the only begotten of the eternal Father: Thou, I

^a 2 Tob ii. 12.

say, my dearest *Jesus*, who art the very way, the truth, and the life, who camest down a teacher from GOD, and teachest the way of GOD in truth: Yea, and by thy own example leadeest us to life. For verily thy life is the pattern for us to live by; and he that would be accounted a christian, must tread in thy footsteps, according to the testimony of that Disciple whom thou lovedst: *He that saith he abideth in Christ, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked^b*. Why therefore should we delay to follow thee, tho' not with equal paces, yet at a distance at least, and so far forth as our frailty will permit? For it is a thing truly glorious to follow the Lord.

But do thou, O most faithful Guide, who callest upon every one of us, saying: *Follow me, for he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness*, do thou strengthen and enable us to do as thou commandest. For thou seest what faint and cold affections we have towards thee; how many alluring objects seduce us; how many impediments and obstacles lie in our way. O how few follow thee with their whole heart, even amongst those who seem, yea profess to follow thee closer than others! I speak

^b John ii. 6.

not of those, who deviating from the strait and royal road, that is, from thy footsteps, follow strange Gods, and go after the lusts of their own heart: Even those *who will not the knowledge of thy ways, and the way of peace*, as being rugged and strait at first; and therefore chuse that broad and spacious way, which being bestrow'd with flowers and pleasures, looks gay and smiling, and pleases the generality of the world. But, alas! by a late and perchance a fruitless repentance they condemn their error, finding that *they had wearied themselves for nought in the way of iniquity.*

Their footsteps terrify us, howsoever pleasing and inviting at the entrance; for what else is there but *sorrow and misery in their ways*? Wherefore we make choice of thee, O Lord, for our Guide, who wentest before us; and what wilt thou, but that we follow thee? But this we cannot do without thee; unless thou, who shewest the way, reach forth thy hand also. Draw us after thee, and we will follow the odour of thy ointments. Lead us, O Lord, in the way of thy commandments, for it is that we desire. But remove the way of iniquity far from us. Lead us wheresoever thou pleasest: We will follow securely; for

we cannot be led astray, thou being our Guide. Be it so, that the way is steep, rough, and narrow; we will notwithstanding follow chearfully, provided thou lead us. He must be a faint-hearted and cowardly foldier indeed, who refuses to march, where he sees his captain lead the way.

An ADVERTISEMENT to the Reader.

Shewing how these, or any other Books of Devotion may be read with Edification. Written in Latin by Jacob Horstius; and thus English'd.

I. **S**ET apart a certain time every day for this pious reading, and observe the same inviolably, as far at least as thou possibly canst. If any justifiable or lawful occasion should happen to take up or steal away the hour stated and appointed for this exercise, be sure to recover it the next. Since a certain time every day is allotted, and that too, willingly and liberally enough, to the body, that viler part of us, for its refreshment

refreshment by meat, sleep, recreation, and the like; is it meet, that the so much worthier, and more precious part, the soul, should be denied some reasonable portion of our time for its spiritual repast and nourishment?

II. Prepare thy soul for this sort of reading, in the first place, by purity of intention, whereby thou art to seek only the bare proficiencie of thy soul in virtue, and to have no other aim whatsoever; next, by a short ejaculation, or darting up of thy soul to God, whereby thou art to ask the light of the Holy Spirit, and grace to make a good use of what thou readest, to know what God requires of thee, and to execute his will when known, in spite of all the reluctancies of self-love. Our THOMAS himself sets down a form admirably suiting this preparation, Book III. Chapter II. which therefore I should advise to be used always as a preparatory to pious reading.

III. Read not cursorily and hastily, but step by step, with sedateness, and great attention: Not without a due pause, and rest between; that so by stopping a little at every turn, by recollecting what hath been read, by casting about, and considering how
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the same may be reduc'd to practice, there may be room for the divine illumination to strike in upon, and irradiate thy soul. Furthermore, let the course of thy reading be fixt and orderly, not roving and desultory, by snaps and snatches. It is a mark of a deprav'd appetite, and ill-dispos'd stomach, to taste of every thing, and to take up with no one certain dish. By this means the body is rather disorder'd than nourish'd. Whatsoever book therefore you take in hand, read it thorough, and in order. Yet if any parts or passages thereof more nearly concern thee, touch thy affections more sensibly, or are more accommodate and adapt to thy estate, thy needs, and the present posture of thy spirit; to read these over and over again will do no hurt, but rather a great deal of good; especially if thou add thereunto a particular examination of thy conscience.

IV. Endeavour to excite pious affections suitable to the subject you are upon; otherwise the reading will be empty and barren; which may enlighten indeed the understanding, but will make no impression upon the heart. And therefore there ought ever and anon to be interpos'd certain pious breathings to God for grace and strength
effectually

effectually to perform what thou readeſt. Thou muſt alſo form practical reſolutions correſpondent and conformable to what is read. Moreover it were adviſable to ſelect ſome of the more illuſtrious and remarkable ſayings, or precepts, and to lay them up in the ſtore-houſe of thy memory, to be frequently ruminated and pondered; or as arrows out of a quiver, to be drawn forth in ſeaſon, and as occaſion ſhall ſerve, againſt this or that temptation, againſt ſuch or ſuch a vice, to which thou art by nature or cuſtom moſt ſubject; or to be uſed as ſpurs to virtue, for the exciting and quickning of humility, patience, the love of GOD, and the like.

V. Conclude thy reading with a ſhort aſpiration to GOD, that he would preſerve the ſeed ſown in the ground of thine heart, and give a bleſſing to it, that it may bring forth fruit in due ſeaſon. Finally, leſt thou ſhouldeſt reject this practice, as a thing that will take up too much of thy time; know that all may be diſpatch'd in a moment almoſt, and by one breath, as it were, of the mind. Yet if it ſhould require ſome ſmall ſpace; think not much of it: Thou canſt in nothing lay out thy time more profitably.

bly. Consider how in other things; and those many times vain too, and of no importance, we grudge no expence of time. If the perusers of this little book of the *Imitation* carefully observe these rules in their reading it, *Christ* perchance shall have, for the future, more *Imitators*.



OF THE
 IMITATION
 OF
 CHRIST.

BOOK I.

Admonitions useful towards a Spiritual Life.

CHAP. I.

*Of the Imitation of Christ, and Contempt
 of all worldly Vanities.*

I.  *E that followeth me, walketh
 not in darkness, saith the Lord.
 These are the words of Christ,
 by which we are admonish'd to
 imitate his life and manners, if we would
 be truly enlighten'd, and deliver'd from all*

• John viii. 12.

blindness

blindness of heart. Let it therefore be our chiefest study to meditate upon the life of *Jesus Christ*.

II. The doctrine of *Christ* surpasseth all the doctrines of the Saints; and he that had the Spirit, would find therein a hidden Manna. But it falleth out, that many are but little affected by the frequent hearing of the Gospel; because they are not endu'd with the Spirit of *Christ*. But he that would fully and relishingly understand the words of *Christ*, must endeavour to conform his whole life and conversation to the pattern of *Christ*.

III. What doth it avail thee to have profound disputes about the Trinity; if thou wantest humility, whereby thou displeasest the Trinity? Verily, profound speculations do not make a man holy and righteous, but a good life renders him dear to God. I had rather feel compunction, than know wherein it consists. If thou hadst the whole Bible by heart, and a thorough comprehension of all the sayings of the philosophers; what would all profit thee without the love of God, and grace? *Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity*^b, except only

^b Eccles. i. 2.

the loving of GOD, and the serving of him alone. This is the soveraign wisdom, by a contempt of the world to aspire after the Kingdom of Heaven.

IV. It is therefore Vanity to seek perishing riches, and to place our hope and confidence in them. It is also Vanity to court honours, and to advance himself to an exalted station. It is Vanity to indulge the desires of the flesh, and to pursue that, for which thou must afterwards suffer grievous pains. It is Vanity, to wish for a long life, and to be little concerned about a good life. It is Vanity, to mind only the present life, and not to look forward to those things which are to come. It is Vanity to set thy affections on that which passeth away with all swiftness, and not to hasten thither where everlasting joy abideth.

V. Call to mind often that proverb; *that the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing* *. Use therefore thy utmost endeavours to withdraw thy heart from the love of *the things that are seen*, and to turn it upon *the things that are not seen*. For those who follow their own sensual appetites and desires, defile

* Eccles. i. 8.

their Conscience, and lose the grace and favour of GOD.

CHAP. II.

Of an humble Opinion of ourselves.

I. **E**VERY man naturally desires to know, but knowledge without the fear of GOD, what doth it avail? Better verily is an humble peasant that serveth GOD, than a proud philosopher, who, neglecting himself, contemplates the course of the Heavens. He that knows himself well, becomes vile in his own eyes, and is not delighted with the praises of men. If I knew all things which are in the world, and were not in charity, what would it avail me in the sight of GOD, who will judge me according to what I have done?

II. Cease from an inordinate desire of knowledge; because therein is found much distraction and delusion. Knowing men are fond of being esteemed, and called wise men. There are many things, the knowledge whereof is of little or no service to the soul. And he is very unwise, who lays out himself upon things that contribute

bute nothing to his salvation. Many words do not satisfy the soul; but a good life is a comfortable refreshment to the mind: And a pure conscience ministers great confidence towards GOD.

III. The more, and the better thou knowest, so much the heavier shall thy account be, unless thy life be proportionably holier. Be not therefore lifted up upon the account of any Art or Science: But rather let the knowledge that is given thee render thee more fearful and watchful over thy self. If thou thinkest thou knowest many things, and comprehendest them well enough: Yet know withal, that there are many more things thou knowest not. Be not exalted, nor entertain any high conceits of thy self; but confess thy ignorance rather. Why shouldst thou prefer thy self before any one, since many are to be found learnede than thou, and more skillful in the law of GOD? If thou wouldst know and learn any thing to purpose, love to be unknown, and to be lookt upon as nothing.

IV. The highest and most profitable lesson is this; the true knowledge and contempt of our selves. To have no opinion at all of himself, and always to think well and highly of others; is great wisdom, and perfection.

fection. Though thou shouldst see another guilty of some notorious sin, or grievous folly; thou oughtest not therefore to think thy self better than he: Because thou canst not tell how long thou mayst persist in a good estate. We are all of us frail; but thou shalt esteem none frailer than thy self.

CHAP. III.

Of the Doctrine of Truth.

I. **B**lessed is the man, whom the Truth teacheth, not by dark figures, and sounds that pass away, but by a direct and full communication of itself: Our own opinion and sense of things oftentimes deludes us, and is but short-sighted. To what purpose is it to cavil and dispute so much about hidden and obscure matters, for which we shall not be called to an account at the Day of Judgment, because we were ignorant of them? An egregious folly this, to neglect useful and necessary things; and to bend our thoughts upon things curious, and hurtful: *We have eyes and see not.*

II. And what have we to do with Logical Subtilties?

subtilities? He to whom the eternal Word speaketh, is at once happily deliver'd from a world of vain notions, and idle speculations. From this Word alone all things proceed, and all things without voice or language speak this alone: This is that Principle, which also speaketh within us, and without which no man understands, or judges aright. The man to whom all things are one, and that reduces all things to one, and sees all things in one; may be firm and stable in heart; and abideth in perfect rest and tranquillity in God. "O GOD thou Truth eternal, make me one with thee in everlasting love! I am many times weary of reading, and weary of hearing: In thee alone I find the sum of all my wishes and desires. Let all teachers be silent: Let the whole creation be dumb before thee: Do thou alone speak unto me."

III. The more a man advances in unity and simplicity of heart; the more he retires into his own breast, and withdraws from exterior objects; the more diffusive and sublime is his knowledge of things, and this, without labour and pains: Because he receives intellectual light from above. A soul pure, simple, and stable, is not distracted in a multiplicity of affairs: Because it refers

all its actions to the glory of God, and being at rest in its self labours to be free from all private respects and self-seeking. What encumbers and molests thee more than the unmortify'd affections of thine own heart? A truly good and pious man first orders and disposes all his business within himself, before he enters upon the execution of it in publick. Accordingly he suffers not himself to be byassed in his actions by any inordinate inclination; but on the other hand, is so much master of himself as to conduct them all according to the dictates of right reason. What man hath a sharper conflict, than he that labours to overcome himself? And this should be our principal and constant business, *viz.* To gain a conquest over our selves, and daily to get ground of our selves, by becoming more masterly Proficients in holiness and virtue.

IV. All perfection in this life hath a mixture of imperfection in it; and every speculation of ours is obscured and clouded with a certain dimness. An humble knowledge of thy self is a surer way of bringing thee to God, than a profound enquiry after learning. Knowledge is not blameable, nor the understanding of any thing whatsoever; which is good, (simply and in it self considered,)

dered,) and ordained by GOD: But a good conscience, and a virtuous conversation is ever to be preferred before it. But because most men affect more to know much, than to live well: For this reason they often fall into error, and reap none at all, or but slender fruit of their studies.

V. O would men but use as much diligence to root out their vices, and to implant in themselves virtues, as they do to raise curious and unprofitable questions: There would not be so much wickedness and scandal among the people, nor so much dissoluteness and disorder in our Monasteries! Assuredly, at the Day of Judgment, we shall not be examined what we have read, but what we have done; nor how eloquently we have spoke, but how religiously we have lived. Tell me, where are now all those Masters and Professors of Sciences, with whom you was so well acquainted, whilst they lived and flourished in learning? Their Prebends and Benefices others are now in possession of, and GOD knows whether they ever so much as send a thought after them; in their life-time they were thought considerable, but now not a word is said of them.

VI. O how quickly doth the glory of
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the world pass away! Would to God their life had been answerable to their knowledge: They had then studied and read to good purpose. How many perish in the world through vain unprofitable knowledge, whilst they little concern themselves about the service of God; And because they chuse rather to be great than humble, therefore they are destroy'd and vanish in their own imaginations. That man is truly great, who hath a great degree of charity. That man is truly great, who is little in his own eyes, and esteems the highest pitch of honour as nothing. That man is truly wise, who counts all earthly things *as dross and dung, that he may win Christ*^a. And that man is truly learned, who hath learnt to do the will of God, and to abandon his own will.

CHAP. IV.

Of Prudence in our Conduct.

I. **W**E are not to believe every word we hear, nor every suggestion of our own minds; but to weigh and examine the

^a Phil. iii. 8.

thing coolly and deliberately, and to judge according to God, that is, according to charity. Nevertheless (a deplorable thing to consider!) we are many times more ready to believe and speak evil of our neighbour, than good; so great is our weakness! But perfect men are not forward to believe every thing that is brought them: Because they are sensible of the infirmity of man which is prone to evil, and too apt to falter in point of speech.

II. It is an argument of great wisdom, not to be rash and heady in acting, nor to be obstinate and inflexible in our own private sentiments and opinions. It is an effect also of the same wisdom, not to give credit to common reports: Nor to vent immediately and discharge into the ears of others what we have heard, or even believe. Advise with a discreet and conscientious man: And seek rather to be instructed by one better than thy self, than to follow thy own inventions. A good and a holy life renders a man wise before God, and gives him good conduct and experience in abundance of things. The more humble a man is in himself, and the more subject and resigned to the will of God, so much the more prudent shall he be in all his affairs, and enjoy so much the greater peace and tranquillity of mind.

CHAP,

CHAP. V.

Of the Reading of the Holy Scriptures.

I. **T**Ruth is to be sought in the holy Scriptures, not eloquence. Every part of the holy Text ought to be read with the same Spirit wherewith it was penn'd. We are to seek edification rather in the Scriptures, than subtilty and accuracy of speech. We ought to read the plain and the devout parts of Scripture with the same affection and delight, as those which are more sublime and profound. Let not the authority of the Penman offend thee, whether he were a person of small or great learning; but let the love of pure truth draw thee to read. Examine not who said this or that, but mark well what is said.

II. Men pass away, but the *truth of the Lord abideth for ever*. God speaketh to us in divers manners, without any partial respect of persons. Our own curiosity many times is a hindrance to us in reading the Scriptures; when we endeavour to comprehend, and stand to examine and discuss, where the eye ought simply to pass over. If thou wouldst reap profit, read with hu-

mility, simplicity, and faith; and never affect the reputation of Learning. Consult with pleasure wise and holy men, and receive with respect and silence their Interpretations: Neither let the parables and proverbial sentences of the Ancients be disgusting to thee; for they were not uttered at all adventures, and without cause.

CHAP. VI.

Of Inordinate Affections.

I. **W**Hensoever a man desireth any thing inordinately, from that very moment he findeth trouble and disquiet within himself. The proud man and the covetous are never at rest: The poor and humble in spirit possess their souls in a multitude of peace. The man that is not yet perfectly dead to himself is quickly tempted, and suffers himself to be vanquish'd in things small and trivial. A man weak in spirit, and as yet carnal in a manner, and inclined to sensible things, cannot without difficulty wean himself perfectly from earthly desires. And therefore he oftentimes feels regret, in withdrawing himself from
them:

them: He is also apt to fly into anger, if any one opposes him.

II. But if he hath given the reins to, and compassed his irregular desire, immediately he is stung with remorse of conscience: because he hath indulg'd his passion, which contributes nothing to the peace he sought. True peace of heart therefore is found by resisting our passions, and not by gratifying them. Consequently there is no peace in the heart of a carnal man; nor in a person abandon'd to exterior things, but in a fervent only, and spiritual man.

CHAP. VII.

Of flying vain Hope and Elevation of Heart.

I. **H**E that putteth his Hope in man, or in any created thing, dependeth upon vanity and a shadow. Be not asham'd to serve thy Brethren, (tho' in the meanest offices) for the love of *Jesus Christ*: Nor to appear poor and mean in this world. Depend not upon thy self, but place all thy confidence in God. Do what in thee lies, and
God

GOD will be aiding and assisting to thy goodwill and sincere intention. Trust not in thy own wisdom, nor in the address and craft of any man living: But rather in the grace and favour of GOD, who helpeth the humble, and humbleth the self-presuming.

II. Glory not in riches, if thou hast them: Nor in friends, because they are powerful: But in GOD, who giveth all things, and is desirous to give us himself also, besides and above all other gifts. Think not highly of thy self upon the account of strength, or beauty; which a small sickness will destroy and decay. Please not thy self with thy abilities, or wit; lest thou displease GOD, whose is wholly whatsoever natural good thou hast.

III. Esteem not thy self better than others, lest haply in the sight of GOD, who knoweth what is in man, thou be accounted worse. Be not proud of good works: because the judgment of GOD, and the judgments of men are different; and that often displeaseth him, which pleaseth them. If thou hast any good quality in thee, believe better qualities may be found in others; in order to keep thee humble. There can be no hurt in postponing thy self to all: But it will be exceeding dangerous, to prefer
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thy self before so much as one. Perpetual peace dwelleth with the humble: But in the heart of the proud, envy, emulation, and wrath.

CHAP. VIII.

Of shunning too much Familiarity.

I. **O** Pen not thine heart to every man^b: But communicate thy affairs to a prudent and religious person. Converse but rarely with young men, and strangers. Flatter not the rich; neither do thou affect to be seen in the presence of great Personages. Associate thy self with the humble, and simple, with the devout and virtuous: and discourse of such things as tend to edification. Be not familiar with any woman: But in general, commend all good women to God. Desire to be familiar only with God, and his Angels; and shun the acquaintance of men.

II. To be in charity with all men is necessary, but to be familiar with all men, is

^b Ecclus. viii. 19.

not expedient. It sometimes falls out, that a person unknown shines in reputation and character: Who notwithstanding loses in the eye of the beholder, and effaces by his presence the esteem before conceiv'd of him. We sometimes think to please others by our conversation: And we begin rather to disgust them by the ill qualities they discover in us.

CHAP. IX.

Of Obedience and Subjection.

IT is a matter of considerable advantage to persevere in obedience, to live under the direction of a Superior, and not to be one's own master. It is much safer to obey, than to command. Many submit more out of necessity, than from a principle of duty and conscience; and to such, this is a state of torment, and continual murmuring. Nor will they ever attain to liberty of spirit; till they have learnt to obey heartily and voluntarily, for God's sake. Run from place to place as much as thou wilt; thou wilt never find repose but in an humble submission

mission to the conduct of a Superior. A fond imagination of being easier elsewhere, and a desire of change, hath deceiv'd many.

II. True it is, that every man loves to act according to his own judgment; and is best affected towards those who are of the same opinion with him. But if God dwell among us, and rule in our hearts, we must sometimes necessarily abandon our own sense, for the good of peace. Who is so absolutely wise, as to be able to know all things completely? Wherefore, be not too confident of thy own sense: But be content freely to hear the sense of others also. If thy own judgment be right and yet thou depart from it for the sake of God, and follow that of another, thou shalt draw from thence spiritual profit.

III. For I have often heard say, that it is safer to hear, and to take advice, than to give it. It is possible that a man may have a right sense, and a just and true notion of a thing: Nevertheless to refuse to acquiesce and comply with others, when occasion or reason requires it, is a sign of pride, and wilfulness.

CHAP. X.

Of avoiding Superfluity of Words.

I. **D**Ecline crowds and company, and the ordinary conversation of the world, as much as possibly thou canst: For discourse about worldly affairs, tho' innocently meant, is a great hindrance to our proficience. For we are soon defiled and captivated by vanity. I could wish I had held my peace many times, and not been in company. But how comes it to pass, that we are so forward to talk, and to discourse one with another; when yet these conversations rarely end without some wound of conscience? For this reason we are so fond of talking, because by mutual conferences, we seek comfort one from another: And desire to ease our heart tir'd and oppress'd with fundry thoughts. And we take great delight in talking, and thinking of those things, which we love much, or desire vehemently, or which we feel to be grievous to us.

II. But alas! Often in vain, and to no purpose. For this outward consolation is no small obstacle to the inward, and the
divine

divine consolation. Wherefore we must watch and pray: lest our time pass away idly and unprofitably. If it be proper and expedient to speak, speak those things which belong to edification. An evil habit, and our neglect and unconcernedness to profit daily, and to grow in grace, is in great measure the cause of our being so lavish and unguarded in our speech, and that we keep not the door of our lips. Nevertheless godly and spiritual conferences are a mighty furtherance of our spiritual growth: Especially when persons, like in temper and spiritual mindedness, associate together in God.

CHAP. XI.

How to obtain Peace of Mind; and of Zeal and Fervour as to Spiritual Proficiency.

I. **W**E might enjoy much Peace, if we would forbear troubling ourselves with what other people say and do, and in which we are no way concern'd. How is it possible for that man to continue long in Peace, who intermeddles with other mens concerns?

concerns? Who seeks occasions of disquiet abroad? Who but little; or but rarely recollects himself, and descends into his own breast? Blessed are those that walk in simplicity: For they shall enjoy a profound peace.

II. Whence was it, that some of the Saints became so perfect, and contemplative? Even because they made it their whole business to mortify all earthly desires; and for this reason they were at liberty to cleave unto God with the whole bent of their soul, and to attend themselves and their own hearts without the least distraction. For our parts, we are too much taken up with our own passions, and too tenderly affected with the transitory things of this world. We seldom overcome perfectly so much as one vice, and are not inflam'd with a desire of advancing daily more and more in the spiritual life: And this is the reason why we remain so cold and lukewarm.

III. If we were perfectly dead unto our selves, and nothing hamper'd and intangled us inwardly: Then should we be in a capacity also to relish the things of God, and to experience a little the sweets of Heavenly contemplation. The grand or only impediment is this, that we have not
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entirely subdu'd our passions, and inordinate desires: And that we endeavour not to walk in the perfect way of the Saints. When any little misfortune comes across us, we are too soon dejected, and have recourse to human consolations.

IV. Did we endeavour, like men, to stand our ground in the battel; doubtless we should find the Lord sending in his succour from above. For he is always ready to assist those who strive, and place their hope in his grace: Yea, he creates us occasions of striving, to the end we may overcome. If we place our Proficiency in religion only in outward observances, our devotion will quickly be at an end. But let us *lay the axe to the root of the tree*; that being purg'd from our passions, we may possess our souls in peace.

V. If every year, we did but root out one vice, we should quickly become perfect men. But now we are many times sensible of the direct contrary; and find our selves to have been better and holier men at the beginning of our conversion, than after many years Profession of a religious life. The fervour of our affection, and our progress in holiness, ought in all reason to advance daily; but now we reckon

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on it a great matter, if any man has been able to retain some degree of his first Zeal. Did we but offer a little violence to our selves at the beginning, we should soon after be able to do all things with ease and delight.

VI. It is hard to part with things to which we have been accustom'd; but harder yet, to oppose and stem our own will. But if thou canst not overcome lesser difficulties, how wilt thou surmount greater? Resist thy inclinations at the very first, and unlearn all thy evil customs; lest they bring thee by little and little to a great difficulty. O if thou didst but consider what peace thou wouldest bring to thy self, and joy to others, by living as thou oughtest; I verily think thou wouldest be more careful and zealous of profiting in the spiritual life.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Benefit of Adversity.

I. **I**T is good for us that we have sometimes grievous uneasinesses and crosses; because these often call a man's thoughts home to himself, and give him to understand

stand, that he is in a state of banishment, and that he is not to set up his hope in any worldly thing. It is good for us also, that we now and then meet with persons that contradict us; and that men have an ill and sinister opinion of us, even though our actions and intentions be good. These things help often to humility, and guard us from vain glory. For then chiefly it is, that we have recourse to the witness within us, which is God, when outwardly we are undervalu'd and despis'd by men, and people believe ill of us.

II. And therefore a man ought so entirely to place his confidence and dependence upon God, that he shall not need to seek many human comforts. When a well-dispos'd man is in tribulation, or is tempted, or is sorely troubled with evil thoughts; he then understands better the great need he hath of God, without whom he is sensible he can do nothing that is good. Then also he sorroweth, he sighs, he groans, and poureth out his requests to be delivered from the miseries he endures: Then is he weary of living any longer, and wishes death would come, that he *may be dissolv'd, and be with Christ*. Then also is he fully convinc'd, that perfect security and complete

plete rest are not consistent with our present state in this world.

CHAP. XIII.

Of resisting Temptations.

I. **S**O long as we live in this world, it is impossible we should be without tribulation and temptation. Whence we find it written in the Book of *Job*, that *the life of a man upon earth is a warfare*^a. For this reason every one ought to be solicitously careful about his particular temptations, and to watch in prayer, lest the Devil find an opportunity of deceiving him; who never sleeps, but *goes about continually, seeking whom he may devour*^b. There is no man so perfect, so holy, as never to be assaulted with temptations; and we cannot be entirely exempt from them.

II. Notwithstanding, temptations are hugely advantageous to a man, though they are troublesome and grievous; for under their discipline a man is humbled, purg'd and in-

^a Job vii. 1.

^b 1. Pet. v. 8

structed. All the Saints have passed through sundry tribulations and temptations, and have profited thereby: And such as have not been able to sustain temptations well, became reprobate and fell away. There is no Order of Religion so holy, no place so retired, but that temptations, or crosses will intrude upon them.

III. A man is not secure from temptations perfectly and entirely, whilst he lives upon earth: Because we carry in us the matter of our temptations, being born in concupiscence. No sooner does one temptation or tribulation go, but another comes: And we shall ever have something to suffer; because we are fallen from the happiness of our first estate. Many seek to fly temptations, and fall more grievously into them. By flight alone we cannot conquer: But by patience and true humility we become stronger than all our enemies.

IV. He that declines only the outward occasion, without pulling up the root, will make but a poor progress: Nay, his temptations will return upon him the sooner, and he will feel himself in a worse case than before. Temptations are more effectually overcome by little and little, and by patience and long-suffering, together with
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the divine assistance, than by severe treatment of our selves, and any the violentest and most obstinate efforts of our own strength. Ask advice often, whilst you are under temptation: And deal not roughly with another that is tempted, but administer comfort to him, even as you would be done by your self.

V. The beginning of all temptations to evil, is inconstancy of mind, and want of trust in God: For as a ship without a pilot is driven to and fro by the waves; so the man that is slack and remiss, and that quits his own purposes, is shaken with temptations of divers sorts. As fire trieth gold, so doth temptation a righteous man. We are many times ignorant of our own strength; but temptation discovers what we are. Notwithstanding we must be always upon the watch, and especially at the beginning of a temptation; because the enemy is then more easily conquered, if he be not in the least suffer'd to enter the door of our hearts, but be resisted without the gate, at the first knock. Upon which account a certain Author hath said:

*Take physick early: Med'cines come too late,
When the disease is grown inveterate. Ov.*

For at first a plain single thought presents itself to the mind. Then, a strong imagination; after, a sensible delight; upon this, evil motions: And lastly, the assent of the will: And so by little and little the malignant Enemy enters wholly, whilst he is not resisted at the beginning. And by how much the longer a man is slack in resisting, he becomes daily so much the weaker in himself, and his Adversary the stronger against him.

VI. These trials are severer upon some, at the beginning of their conversion; upon others, at the end; and some again are tormented with them almost all their life long. Some have but very easy and gentle trials: And all this is according to the wisdom and justice of the divine dispensation, which weighs the state and merit of persons', and fore-ordains all things to the good and salvation of his elect.

VII. We ought not therefore to despair, when temptations beset us, but so much the more fervently to pray unto God, that he would vouchsafe to help us in every tribulation; and he no doubt will, as *St. Paul* expresses it, *give the temptation such an issue, that we may be able to bear it*. *Læt*

us therefore humble our souls under the hand of God^b in every temptation and tribulation; for he will save and exalt the humble in spirit^c.

VIII. Temptations and tribulations are the proof how much a man hath profited: His merit is the greater thereby, and his virtue the more apparent and conspicuous. It is no mighty matter, for a man to be devout and fervent, whilst he lies under no load or pressure: But if in the midst of trials, he possesses his soul in patience; this promises great Proficiency. Some persons are preserv'd from grand temptations, and are many times vanquished in trivial ones that occur every day; to the end that being thus humbled, they may never presume upon their own strength in matters of difficulty, when they are foiled in others so slight.

CHAP. XIV.

Of avoiding rash Judgment.

TURN thine eyes inward upon thy self; and beware of judging other

^b 1 Pet. iv. ^c Psal. xxxiv.

men's actions. In judging others, a man loses his labour; he is most commonly mistaken, and easily sins; whereas in judging, and carefully examining himself, his labour is profitably bestowed, and ever turns to good account. According as we stand affected to a thing, so generally we judge of it: For private affection naturally bereaves us of true judgment. If God were always the pure intention and aim of our desires and designs, we should not be so apt to be troubled when matters disagree with our own sense of things.

II. But many times there is something lurking within, or happening from without, which draws us after it. Many secretly seek themselves in their actions, and perceive it not: And these men seem to enjoy a calm and peaceful state of mind, so long as things agree with their own inclination, and sentiment: But if any thing succeeds otherwise than they desire, straitway they are disturb'd, and become sad and displeas'd. Diversity of judgments and opinions very often causes differences and dissensions between friends and townsmen, between the religious and the devout.

III. It is a difficult thing to leave an old custom. And no man is willing to be led farther

farther than himself can see. If thou rest more upon thy own reason or industry, than upon that principle of virtue, which should dispose thee to an entire submission to *Jesus Christ*, thou wilt seldom, and slowly obtain any extraordinary degree of illumination; because GOD expects a perfect subjection of our selves unto him; and that the flames of our love transcend all the heights of our own reason.

CHAP. XV.

Of Works of Charity.

I. **F**OR no worldly consideration, nor for the love of any person whatsoever, must we be prevail'd upon to do an ill thing: But yet for the benefit of a person, who stands in need of our relief, a good work is sometimes to be intermitted and broke off, or rather exchange'd for a better: For by doing this, the good work is not lost, but changed into a better. Without Charity the outward work profiteth nothing: But whatsoever is done out of Charity, be it never so little and contemptible in appearance,

rance, it all turns to profit. For GOD has more regard to the motive that sets us to work, than to the action it self, or the quality of it.

II. The man that loves much, [does much; and he does much, that does a thing well; and he does well, who prefers the good of the community before the gratifying of his own will. That which frequently passes for Charity is rather Carnality: Because men rarely act upon other motives than natural inclination, the doing their own will, expectation of a recompense, affection, or convenience.

III. He that is possess'd of true and perfect Charity, seeketh himself in nothing: But his desire is, that GOD alone may be glorify'd in all things. He also envieth no body; because he loves no private joy; nor will he rejoice in himself alone, but wishes to be made blessed in the enjoyment of GOD above all created goods. He ascribes nothing of good to any creature, but refers all to GOD alone, from whom, as the source and spring, all things originally proceed; and in whom all the Saints finally rest in perfection of bliss. O! If a man had but a spark of true Charity, verily he would discern all earthly things to be full of vanity.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Of bearing with other Men's Defects.

I. **T**Hose things that a man is not able to amend in himself or others, he ought to bear patiently, till God see fit to order matters otherwise. Consider that perhaps it is better so for thy trial, and the exercise of thy patience; without which our good works^a are of little weight. Thou oughtest notwithstanding to pray against such lets and impediments, that God would vouchsafe to assist thee, and that thou mayst have strength to bear them with decency and constancy of mind.

II. If any one after once or twice admonishing will not give over, contend no longer with him, but commit the whole affair to God, that his will may be done, and his honour accomplished in all his servants, who knows perfectly well how to turn evil into good. Labour to be patient in bearing the defects and infirmities of others, of what sort soever they be; because thou thy self also hast many failings of thine own, which must be born

^a In the original Latin: Merits.

by others. If thou art not able to make thyself what thou wouldst be, how shouldst thou be able to have another to thy liking in all things? We would willingly have others perfect; and yet we amend not our own defects.

III. We would have others severely corrected, but are not for being corrected ourselves. We are offended with the great liberties of others; and yet we will not be refus'd in any thing we desire our selves. We would have others restrained by rigorous laws; and yet are unwilling that any the least check should be put upon our own freedoms. And thus it appears, how rarely we weigh our selves and our neighbour in the same scale. If we were all perfect, what could we then have to suffer from others for the love of GOD?

IV. But now God hath so order'd it, that we may learn to bear one another's burthens: For there is no man without his failings, no man without his burden: No man self-sufficient, no man wise enough of himself: But we ought to bear with one another, to comfort one another, to help, instruct, and admonish one another. Besides, the virtue of a man is best discover'd by the occasion of some suffering: For occasions

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do not make a man frail, but only shew what he is.

CHAP. XVII.

Of a Monastick Life.

I. **T**HOU must learn to subdue and break thy own will in many things, if thou wouldst maintain peace and a good understanding with others. It is a glorious thing to live in a Monastery, or in any Society, and there to converse without quarrel or complaint, and to persevere therein faithfully even unto death. Blessed surely is the man, that hath there liv'd well, and dy'd happily. If thou wouldst maintain thy ground as thou oughtest, and make a due advancement in virtue, account thy self as a banish'd man and a pilgrim upon earth. Thou must become a fool for the sake of *Christ*, if thou wouldst lead a life of religion.

II. The peculiar Habit and Shave signify little; it is a change of manners, and a perfect mortification of the passions that make a true Religious. He that seeks any thing
else

else, than purely God, and the salvation of his soul, will find nothing but tribulation and sorrow. Furthermore, no body can continue long in peace of mind, who does not labour to become the least of all, and subject to all.

III. Thou camest to serve, not to rule. Know that thou wert called to suffer, and to labour; not to a life of leisure and ease, or conversation. Here therefore men are proved, as gold in the furnace. Here none can make good his Post, unless he be content to humble himself with his whole heart for the love of God.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the Examples of the holy Fathers.

I. **C**ONSIDER and keep in view the lively patterns set us by the holy Fathers, in whom true perfection and religion shone bright; and thou wilt soon discern, how little it is, and almost nothing, that we do. Alas! What is our life, if compar'd with theirs? Those Saints and friends of *Christ* serv'd the Lord in hunger and thirst; in cold
and

and nakedness, in labour and weariness, in watchings and fastings, in prayers and holy meditations, in persecutions and sundry reproaches.

II. Blessed God! How many and grievous tribulations did the Apostles, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Virgins, and all the rest that endeavour'd to tread in *Christ's* steps, endure! For they hated their own lives in this world, that they might preserve them unto life eternal. O how strict and mortify'd, and self-denying a life did the holy Fathers lead in the wilderness! How long and sharp temptations did they undergo! How many conflicts had they with the enemy! How frequent and ardent were their prayers to GOD! What rigorous courses of abstinence did they go through! With what zeal and fervency did they aspire after higher degrees still of spiritual perfection! With what gallantry and resolution did they wage perpetual war against their vices! What purity and disinterestedness of intention did they constantly carry to God-ward! By day they labour'd, and the nights they spent in prayer to GOD; although even whilst they labour'd, they ceas'd not from mental prayer.

III. They employ'd their whole time
H profit-

profitably: Every hour spent in attending the service of GOD, seem'd short: And through the exceeding sweetness of contemplation, the necessity of bodily refreshment was even forgot. All riches, dignities, honours, friends and relations they renounc'd: They coveted no worldly thing: They scarcely took the necessary supports of life: 'Twas grief and pain to them even to serve the necessities of the body. They were poor therefore in earthly things; but very rich in grace, and the virtues. Outwardly they were necessitous, but inwardly they were refresh'd with grace and divine consolation.

IV. They were aliens and strangers to the world, but nearly allied to, and intimate friends of GOD. In their own eyes they appear'd as a thing of nought, and to the world despicable; but in the sight of GOD they were precious and well beloved. They persevered in true humility: They lived in sincere obedience: They walked in charity and patience; and for this reason they made daily advances in the spirit, and obtain'd a high degree of grace and favour with GOD. They were given for an example to all the Religious; and they ought to excite us more powerfully to endeavour after

ter spiritual proficiencie, than the multitudes of the lukewarm should do, to grow slack and remiss.

V. O how great was the fervour of all Religious Orders at the beginning of their holy institution! O what a spirit of devotion breathed in their prayers! What emulation in virtue! What regularity and strictness of discipline! What reverence and submission in all things to the directions and orders of their Superior! The tracks and footsteps of their life yet remaining, do still testify that they were true and perfect Saints, who in so noble a combat trod the world under their feet. Now-a-days he is greatly accounted of, that hath not transgress'd the Rules of his Order, or that hath been able to bear with patience the burden of the Profession that he hath taken upon himself.

6. O the lukewarmness and remissness of our present state! That we should so soon degenerate from the primitive fervour; even to that degree, that through irksomeness and cold indifference in religious exercises, our very life becomes a burden to us! Pray GOD the desire of all spiritual advancement may not be utterly extinguish'd in thee: In thee, that hast often had so ma-

ny examples of devout persons before thine eyes.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the Exercises of a good Monastick.

I. **T**HE life of a true Recluse ought to be eminently adorn'd with all sorts of virtue; to the end he may be the same person inwardly as he appears outwardly to men. And indeed it may with good reason be expected that there should be much more holiness in the inward disposition of his soul, than what appears abroad to the eyes of men; because it is God that is our inspector; whom we ought infinitely to reverence, wheresoever we are, and to walk in his sight with an Angelical purity. We ought every day to renew our resolution of holy living, and to stir ourselves up to fervour, as though this were the first day of our conversion; and to say, " Assist and
" further me, O Lord my God, in this my
" good resolution, and in thy holy service:
" And grant me grace to begin now from this
" very day to walk perfectly; because all
" that I have done hitherto, is nothing.

II. As

II. As is our resolution, so is the course of our advancement: And great diligence is necessary for him that would greatly advance. And if he that purposes strongly, often fails in performance; what will become of him who purposes rarely, or with but little firmness? Nevertheless it happens sundry ways, that we forsake our good purposes; and even a slight omission of our religious exercises, scarcely passes without some detriment. The good purposes of the righteous depend more upon the grace of God, than upon their own wisdom; and whatever they undertake, it is still in confidence of that. For man proposes, but God disposes: *Neither is the way of man in himself.*

III. If an ordinary customary exercise be sometimes omitted upon the account of some act of piety, or with design to serve a Brother, it may easily afterwards be recover'd again. But if it be lightly passed over through tediousness and indisposition of spirit, or out of carelessness and neglect, it is altogether blameable, and will be found prejudicial. Let us endeavour all we can, we shall still be apt to fail in many things. Yet must we ever fix some certain determinate resolution, and especially against

such things as are our greatest impediments in the christian course. The condition of our estate without, and that of our souls within, must alike be carefully examin'd and regulated; because both contribute greatly to our spiritual advancement.

IV. If thou canst not at all times recollect and take an account of thy self, yet do it sometimes at least, and never less than once a day, *viz.* morning, or evening. In the morning lay down thy scheme, and in the evening examine thy behaviour; how thou hast carried thy self that day in thought, word and deed; because therein perhaps thou hast often offended God and thy neighbour. Gird thy loins like a man of war against the wiles and stratagems of the Devil: Bridle thy appetite, and thou wilt with less difficulty keep under all other fleshly inclinations. Be at no time altogether unemploy'd, but either reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or doing some work of labour for the publick good. Yet bodily exercises are to be us'd with discretion, nor are they to be taken up by all in the same degree.

V. Exercises that are not common, are not to be expos'd to publick view; for private exercises are more safely perform'd in private.

private. Nevertheless care must be taken that thou be not backward to common duties; and forward to private and personal ones; but after thou hast fully and faithfully perform'd those thou art oblig'd to, and that are enjoyn'd thee, if thou hast any spare time after that, betake thee to thy self and thy own breast again, and do just as thy particular devotion shall direct. All persons cannot use one kind of exercise; but one is more convenient for this person, another for that. Again, different exercises are liked according to the seasonableness and agreeableness of the time: Because some relish better upon holydays, others upon common days. Some we stand in need of in a time of temptation, and others in a time of peace and quiet. One sort of thinking we are inclin'd to, when we are in heaviness; and to another, when we are joyful in the Lord.

VI. About the time of the principal Festivals, we ought to renew our holy exercises and to^a raise up our souls by more solemn acts of piety and devotion. From feast to feast we ought to make provision, as if we were

^a In the Original: *And to implore the Intercession of the Saints with more than ordinary fervency.*

now upon the point of leaving this world, and of passing to the eternal feast. Therefore ought we carefully to prepare our selves at these holy times, and to converse more devoutly, and to be more strict in all our religious observances, as though we were shortly at God's hands to receive the recompence of our labours.

VII. And if it be deferred, let us think that we are not sufficiently prepared, and that we are as yet unworthy of *the great glory that shall be revealed in us*^b at the time appointed: And let us endeavour to prepare our selves better for our departure. *Blessed is that servant* (saith the Evangelist St. Luke^c) *whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.*

CHAP. XX.

Of the love of Solitude and Silence.

I. **S**EEK a convenient time to retire and converse with thy self; and think

^b Rom. vi. 18.

^c Ch. xii. 43. 44.

frequently

frequently of the benefits of GOD. Meddle not with nice curious matters: Read such things as are apt to touch thy heart, rather than to employ thy head. If thou couldst withdraw from unnecessary conferences, and idle gaddings about, as also from hearkening to news and running reports; thou wouldst find leisure and opportunity sufficient for exercising and improving good and profitable meditations. The most eminent Saints avoided company, as much as possibly they could; and chose rather to live to, and to serve GOD in secret.

II. A certain Philosopher said: *I never was in company with men, but I came out of it less a man than I went in.* This we often experience when we converse long. It is easier for a man to keep silence altogether, than not to exceed in word. It is easier to keep close at home, than to be sufficiently upon his guard abroad. The man therefore that intends to arrive at the inward and spiritual life, must with *Jesus* withdraw from the multitude. No body appears safely, but he that is hid gladly. No body talks safely, but he that keeps silence willingly. No body governs safely, but he that would be subject contentedly. No man commands safely, but he that has
thoroughly

throughly learnt to obey. No body rejoices securely, but he that has the testimony of a good conscience within him.

III. And yet the security of the Saints has ever been full of the fear of God: Nor was their care and humbleness of mind in the least abated, because of their shining virtues, and extraordinary measures of grace. But the security of the wicked springs from pride and presumption, and proves in the end to have been self-delusion. Never promise thy self absolute security in this life^c, whatever degrees of perfection thou may starrive at.

IV. Many times those that have been in more than ordinary esteem amongst men, have fall'n into proportionably greater danger, upon account of the too great confidence they had in themselves. Whence it is better for many not to be altogether free from temptations, but to be often attack'd, lest they be too secure; or perchance be puffed up into pride; or lastly, give themselves too great a loose to outward comforts. O the man, that never sought transitory joy: That never engaged himself with the world; how good a conscience would he always carry! O the man, that cast off all

^c In the Original: *Tho' thou appear never so good a M^o-nastick, or devout Hermit.*

vain solicitude, and thought only of profitable and divine things, and placed his whole hope in God; in what profound peace and quiet would such an one possess his soul!

V. No man is worthy of heavenly consolation, unless he has diligently exercis'd himself in holy compunction. If thou desire true compunction of heart, *enter thy chamber*^d, and exclude the tumults of the world, as it is written, *be ye touched with regret upon your beds*^e. In thy closet^f thou wilt recover, what thou wilt often lose abroad. The closet continued long in, grows sweet and pleasant, but ill-kept, it becomes tedious and irksome. If at the beginning of thy conversion, thou keep close to it, it will afterwards become to thee as welcome as a beloved friend, and yield thee the truest consolation.

VI. In silence and quiet the devout soul advances apace, and learns the hidden mysteries of Scripture. There she finds floods of tears, wherewith to bathe and cleanse her self every night. There she contracts so much a closer familiarity with her

^d Matth. iv. 6.

^e Psal. vi. 4.

^f In the Original: *in thy Cell*. See again, *The Cell continued in*, &c.

creator, as she lives at a greater distance from all worldly noise and hurry. He therefore that withdraws from his friends and acquaintance, to him will God draw near with his holy Angels. It is better for a man to lie hid, and to prosecute the business of his soul, than to neglect his own salvation, and to work miracles. It is commendable in a person entirely devoted to religion, to go but seldom abroad, to decline being seen of men, and to be as little fond of seeing them.

VII. To what purpose shouldst thou be desirous of seeing that, which thou art not permitted to enjoy? *The world passeth away and the lust thereof*^s. Our sensual inclinations lead us to range abroad; but when the moment is pass'd, what hast thou gain'd to carry home with thee, but remorse of conscience, and a scatter'd unsettled temper of mind? He that goes out full of satisfaction, often returns as full of melancholy; and a gay evening produces a sad morning. Thus all carnal joy enters delightfully, but in the end bites and kills. What canst thou see any where else, that thou dost not see here? Behold the Heaven

and Earth, and all the Elements; for out of these all things were made.

VIII. What canst thou see in any place whatever, which will continue long under the sun? Possibly thou mayst think to be satisfy'd by variety, but that thou canst never attain to. If thou hadst a view at once of all things under the sun, what would it be but a vain vision? Lift up thy eyes to God in the highest Heavens, and pray for pardon of thy sins and negligences. Leave the vanities of the world to the vain men of the world; but do thou apply thy self to those things which God hath commanded thee. Shut thy door upon thee, and invite thy beloved *Jesus* unto thee. Abide with him in thy closet; for thou wilt not find so much peace any where else. Hadst thou not gone abroad, nor heard any idle reports, thou hadst continued in a more calm and composed state of mind. From what time soever thou takest pleasure in hearing news, from that very hour trouble and disquietude of spirit cannot fail to be thy lot.

CHAP. XXI.

Of Compunction of Heart.

IF thou wouldst make any proficiencie, keep thy self in the fear of God, and be not too free, but restrain all thy senses under strict discipline, and let not thy self loose to impertinent mirth. Give thy self up to Compunction of Heart, and thou shalt find devotion. Compunction opens the way to infinite advantages, which dissoluteness of spirit is soon wont to lose again. It is strange, that a man should ever perfectly rejoyce in this life, that considers and weighs his state of banishment, and the multitude of dangers his soul is expos'd to.

II. Through levity of heart, and neglect in examining our defects, we are not sensible of the wounds of our soul; but often vainly laugh, when we have good reason to weep. There is no true liberty, nor honest well-grounded joy, but in the fear of God accompanied with a good conscience. Happy the man, that can throw off every distracting impediment and amusement, and collect his thoughts and fix them entirely upon the single point of holy Compunction.

tion. Happy the man that abandons every thing that can possibly defile or burthen his conscience. Strive manfully; one custom overcomes another. If thou canst persuade thy self to quit the world, the world on the other side will quit thee, and fairly leave thee to do thine own works in quiet.

III. Draw not upon thy self other men's business, nor involve thy self in the concerns of great persons. Keep thine eye always upon thy self in the first place, and be sure to admonish and advise thy self in an especial manner above the dearest friend thou hast. If thou hast not the favour of men, be not griev'd at that; but let this afflict thee, that thou dost not behave thy self with all that exactness and circumspection, which becomes a servant of God, and a devout Recluse. It is many times more profitable and safe for a man not to have many consolations in this life, especially such as are human and worldly: However as for those that are spiritual and divine, if we want these or feel them but seldom, the fault is our own, in that we do not seek Compunction of Heart, nor wholly abandon vain and outward ones.

IV. Acknowledge thy self unworthy of divine consolation, but worthy rather of much

much tribulation. When a man is pierc'd with true Compunction, then the whole world becomes grievous and bitter unto him. A good man finds sufficient matter of grief and tears: For whether he considers himself, or thinks of his neighbour, he finds that no man lives in this world without tribulation: And the more closely he considers himself, the greater still is his grief. The grounds of a just grief and inward Compunction are our sins and transgressions; wherein we lie so envelop'd, that we are rarely able to contemplate heavenly things.

V. If thou didst oftner think of dying, than of living long, doubtless thou wouldst set thy self with more zeal and warmth to amend thy life. And didst thou seriously and earnestly consider the future pains of Hell^b, I believe thou wouldst gladly endure labour and pain, and not be afraid of any austerity. But now because these considerations do not pierce the soul, and that we still love the flattering enticing pleasures of sense, therefore is it that we remain cold and exceeding dull and heavy.

VI. It is many times through the softness

^b In the Latin: *The future pains of Hell, or Purgatory.*
and

and feebleness of the spirit, that the poor body complains so easily. Pray therefore humbly unto the Lord, that he would give thee the spirit of Compunction: And say with the Prophet; *Feed me, O Lord, with the bread of tears, and give me plenteousness of tears to drink*¹.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the consideration of human Misery.

I. **W**retched thou art, wheresoever thou mayst be, and which way soever thou turn thy self, unless thou turn to God. Why art thou troubled, because things succeed not as thou thy self wouldest, and desirest? Who is there, that hath all things according to his wish? Neither I, nor thou, nor any man living upon earth. There is no one in the world without some tribulation or cross, be he King or Pope. Who is the person, that is in the best condition of all? Doubtless he that for God's sake can endure affliction.

II. Many feeble-minded and weak people are apt to cry: Behold, how happy a life such an one leads, how rich he is, how great, how powerful, in how high a station! But consider attentively the good things of Heaven, and thou wilt discern that all these temporal ones are even nothing: That they are very uncertain, and rather troublesome than otherwise, because there is no possessing of them without solicitude and fear. The happiness of a man *consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth*^a; but a competency is sufficient for him. Verily it is a misery to live upon earth. The more spiritual a man desires to be, the bitterer does the present life become unto him; because he is so much the more sensible of, and sees more clearly, the defects of human corruption. For to eat, to drink, to watch, to sleep, to rest, to labour, and to be subject to the other necessities of nature, is really a great misery and affliction to a devout man, who longs to be discharg'd, and to be free from all sin.

III. For the inward man is sorely oppress'd and aggriev'd by the wants and necessities of the body, whilst we live in this world.

^a Luke. xii. 15.

Whence the Prophet devoutly begs to be freed from them, saying: *Bring me, O Lord, out of my necessities*^b. But wo to them that are not sensible of their own misery; and a greater wo still to those, that are in love with this miserable and corruptible life. For some there be so extremely fond of it, (tho' at the same time they have much ado to live, and have nothing but what they can get by labouring or begging) that if they might always live here, they would never think of another world.

IV. O void of understanding, and unbelieving of heart, to be so deeply sunk in earth, as to relish nothing but carnal things! But poor wretches as they are, they shall in the end find by woful experience, how mean and worthless, and even nothing that was, which they set their affections upon. On the other hand, the Saints of God, and all the devout friends of *Christ*, regarded not the things that were agreeable to the flesh, nor what things were in esteem and vogue in their own time; but their whole hope and aim aspir'd after eternal joys. And therefore was the desire of their souls carried upward, to things durable, and that are not

^b Psal. xxiv. 16

seen, lest otherwise the love of the things that are seen might have byas'd and drawn down their hearts to low and earthly objects.

V. O Brother, never give over a good hope of advancing still farther and farther in the spiritual life: Thou hast still time and space for it. Why wilt thou put off thy good purposes from day to day? Up, and begin in this very instant, and say: *Now is the time to be doing, now is the time to fight the good fight, now is the season of amendment.* When thou art in distress and tribulation, then is the time of increasing thy crown^c. Thou must *pass through fire and water*^d, before the times of refreshment come. Unless thou offer violence to thy self, thou wilt never subdue vice. So long as we carry about us this frail body, 'tis impossible for us to be without sin, or to live without irksomeness and pain. We would gladly have a release from all misery; but as through sin we lost our innocence, so with that also we lost all true happiness. It is therefore necessary for us to hold fast patience, and to wait the season of God's

^c In the Latin; *Then is the time of meriting.*

^d Psal. lxvi. 12.

mercy, till *this iniquity be over-past^e*, and *mortality be swelling up of life^t*.

VI. O the exceeding greatness of human frailty, ever prone to sin! To day you confess your sins, and to morrow you commit the very same sins again. This hour you resolve to be watchful, and upon your guard, and the very next hour you act as if you had never resolv'd at all. Good cause have we therefore to humble our selves, and never to have any great conceit of our selves; because we are so frail and unstable. Besides, that may soon be lost through negligence, which with much labour and pains was scarce at last gain'd through grace.

VII. What will become of us in the end, if we grow cool so early? Wo be unto us, if we thus turn aside to repose and ease, as if all were peace and security, when as yet there appears not so much as the least track or footstep of true holiness in all our conversation. We have still need, like well-inclin'd Novices and young Beginners, to be again instructed anew, and form'd afresh to good life; if so perchance there may be hope of any future amendment, and of greater spiritual proficiencie.

^e Psal. lviii. 1.

^t 2 Cor. v. 4.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of the Meditation of Death.

I. **T**HERE will very quickly be an end of thee here: See thou behave thy self after another manner. To day the man is, to morrow he is not seen. And when he is once out of sight, he is soon out of mind too. O the dulness and hardness of man's heart, to think only of things present, and to have no more foresight nor regard to the things that are to come! So oughtest thou to carry thy self in every action and every thought, as if thou wert to die this very day. If thou hadst a good conscience, thou wouldst not much fear Death. It were better to avoid sin than to flee Death. If thou art not prepar'd to day, how dost thou propose to be so to morrow? To morrow is an uncertain day; and how knowest thou, that thou shalt live till to morrow?

II. What availeth it to live long, since we are amended so little? Alas, length of days does not always make us better, but often adds only to the number of our sins. Would to God we had lived in this world,

as we should do, tho' it were but one day! Many count years from the day of their conversion; yet oftentimes the fruit of their amendment is but slender. If it be terrible to die, perhaps it may be more dangerous to live longer. Happy the man, that hath the hour of his Death constantly before his eyes, and that composes himself for dying every day.

III. If thou hast at any time seen another man depart this life, consider that thou also must pass the same way. When it is morning, think thou mayst not live till the evening. And when evening is come, presume not to promise thy self another morning. Be thou therefore always in a readiness, and so live, that Death may never find thee unprepared. Many die suddenly and upon surprise; for *in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh*^a. When that last hour is come, thou wilt begin to have a quite different sense of all thy life past; and thou wilt be exceedingly grieved for having been so negligent and remiss.

IV. O the happiness and wisdom of that man, who makes it his business to be such now while he liveth, as he desires to be

^a Mart. xxiv. 44.

found when he comes to die! For a perfect contempt of the world, a zealous desire of improving in virtue, the love of discipline, the labour of penitence, readiness of obedience, self-denial, and the patient enduring of any cross and affliction whatever for the love of *Christ*, will give a man a great assurance of a happy life after Death. Thou mayst do many good works, whilst thou art in health; but when thou art sick, I see not what thou art able to do. Few are better'd, and amended by a sick bed; in like manner as great Pilgrims seldom become great Saints.

V. Depend not upon friends and relations, neither do thou put off the care of thy soul to after-times: Because men will forget thee sooner, than thou mayst imagine. It were better to provide now in time, and to send thy good works before thee, than to rest upon the help of others after thou art gone. If thou art not concern'd for thy self now, who will be concern'd for thee hereafter? Now are the moments exceeding precious: *Now is the day of salvation: Now is the season of acceptance*^b. But oh! That thou shouldest not

^b 2 Cor. vi. 2.

employ this time more profitably, wherein it is in thy power to^c gain eternal life! A time will come, when thou wilt wish for one day, one hour to amend in; and whether thou wilt obtain it, I know not.

VI. Awake then, my dearest Brother, awake and consider, from what a mighty danger thou mayst deliver thy self; from what a horrible fear rescue thy self, by living in fear at present, and in a constant expectation of Death. Make it thy business now so to live, that at the hour of Death thou mayst have more reason to rejoice than to fear. Learn how to die to the world, that thou mayst then begin to live with *Christ*. Learn now to despise all things, that thou mayst then have no incumbrances, but be at perfect liberty to mount up to *Jesus*. Chastise thy body now by penance, to the end thou mayst then have an assured confidence.

VII. Ah fond man! Why dost thou flatter thy self with the thoughts of living long, when thou canst not promise thy self so much as one day here? How many poor souls have been deluded with this hope, and hurried out of the body, when they least ex-

^c In the original *Latin*: *To merit eternal life.*

pected it? How often hast thou been surpriz'd with the news of such an one being run through; another drowned; a third breaking his neck by a fall; a fourth fallen down dead at table, or choaked with his meat; a fifth making his exit at play; a sixth perishing by fire; a seventh by the sword; an eighth by plague; a ninth by the hand of a high-way-man? And thus the end of all is Death, and the life of man passeth away suddenly like a shadow.

VIII. Who is it that will remember thee after thou art dead and gone? And who is it that will pray for thee? Be doing, be doing now, my dearest friend, whatever thy hand findeth to do; because thou knowest not when thou shalt die, nor yet what will befall thee after Death. Whilst thou hast opportunity, be gathering up a treasure of durable and undecaying riches. Think of nothing but thy own salvation: Be concerned only for the things of God. *Make to thy-self friends now, by reverencing the Saints of God, and imitating their actions, that when thou failest, they may receive thee into everlasting habitations^d.*

IX. Keep thy self as a *Stranger and Pil-*

^d Luke xvi. 9.

grim^e upon earth, who hath no concern in the affairs of the world. Keep thy heart unengaged, and lifted up to God, because thou *hast here no continuing city*^f. Direct thither thy daily prayers, and sighs, and tears; to the end thy Spirit, after Death,^g may obtain to be happily wasted to the Lord. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXIV.

Of Judgment and the Torments of Sinners.

I. **W**Hatsoever thou takest in hand, remember the end; and how thou wilt be able to stand before that severe Judge, from whom nothing is hid; who is not to be pacify'd with bribes, who admitteth excuses; but will judge righteous judgment. O most wretched and senseless sinner! What wilt thou answer unto God, who knoweth all thy evil ways; thou, who sometimes tremblest at the countenance of an angry man? Why dost thou not look forward,

^e 1 Pet. ii. 11. ^f Heb. xiii. 14. ^g In the Original Latin; *May merit to be happily wasted to the Lord.*

^a Eccles. vii. 36.

and provide for thy self against the Day of Judgment; at which time it will be impossible for any one to be excus'd or defended by another; but every one's own burden will be sufficient for himself? Now is thy labour profitable, thy tears acceptable, thy groaning heard, thy contrition satisfactory, and of force to atone and purge away sin.

II. The patient man goes through a severe and wholesome Purgatory, even in this life, who receiving injuries, is more griev'd for another's wickedness, than for the injury done to himself: Who earnestly prays for his enemies, and from his heart forgives their offences: Who delayeth not to ask forgiveness of others: Who is sooner provok'd to compassion, than to anger: Who frequently offers violence to himself, and endeavours to bring the body entirely in subjection to the spirit. It is better to purge our sins, and to cut off our vices now at present, than to reserve them to be purg'd away hereafter. Verily we deceive ourselves through an inordinate love we have for the flesh.

III. What else will that Fire devour, but thy sins? The more thou now indulgest thy self, and gratifiest the flesh, the heavier will be thy reckoning afterwards, and the more
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fewel dost thou store up for those flames to feed upon. The exquisiteness of the torment shall be suited and proportion'd to the nature and quality of each man's sin. There the spiritual sluggard shall be awaken'd, and urg'd incessantly with sharp scourges and burning stings; and the glutton shall be racked with insupportable hunger and thirst. There the luxurious, and voluptuous shall be overwhelmed with waves of flaming pitch and noisom sulphur: And the envious shall howl for pain, like mad dogs.

IV. There shall be no vice, but what shall have its proper torture. There the proud shall be filled with all manner of shame, despight, and scornful reproach; and the covetous shall be pin'd and griped with most miserable want. There one hour of torment shall be more insupportable, than here a hundred years of the sharpest and most severe penance. There is there no respite, no consolation to the Damned: whereas here sometimes we have a truce from our labours, and enjoy the comfort of our friends. Be now sollicitous and sorrowful for thy sins: That at the Day of Judgment thou may'st be secure with the Blessed. *For then shall the righteous stand in great boldness before the face of such as have distressed*

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distressed and oppressed them^f. Then shall he stand up to judge, who now humbly submits to human judicature. Then the poor and the humble man shall have great assurance; and the proud man shall be compassed about with fear on every side.

V. Then will it appear that he was wise in this world, who for the love of *Christ* had learnt to be a fool and despised. Then shall all tribulation patiently undergone be sweet and pleasing; *And all iniquity shall stop her mouth*^g. Then shall every devout man rejoice, and every irreligious man mourn. Then shall the flesh that mortified and beat down it self, triumph more than if it had been always nursed up in delicacies. Then shall the despised weed shine, and the soft raiment lose all its lustre. Then shall the homely cottage be more extoll'd, than the gilded Palace. Then shall a steady constant patience be of more avail, than all the power of the world. Then an honest simple obedience shall be more highly exalted, than all worldly subtilty.

VI. Then shall a pure and good conscience rejoice a man more, than learned philosophy. Then a contempt of riches shall

^f Wisdom v. 1.

^g Psal. cvii. 42.

weigh more, than all the treasures of the worldlings put together. Then shalt thou have greater comfort from having prayed devoutly, than from having fared deliciously. Then shalt thou be better pleased to have kept silence, than to have talked much. Then good works shall avail more than many fine words. Then shall strictness of life and austerity of penance be a greater satisfaction than all earthly delight. Learn now to suffer in slight matters, to the end thou mayst then be deliver'd from sufferings more grievous. Make trial of thy self here first, and think what thou mayst be capable of bearing hereafter. If thou art able to bear so little now, how wilt thou be able to support eternal torments? If now a small suffering make thee so impatient, what will Hell-fire do hereafter? Consider this well: Verily thou canst not have two Paradises; enjoy all the delights and pleasures of this life, and afterwards reign with *Christ* in Heaven.

VII. Supposing thou hadst always lived, to this very day, in honours and pleasures; yet what would all this avail thee, if thou wert to die the next moment? All therefore is Vanity, save only the love of God, and the serving of him alone. For he that loveth

loveth GOD with all his heart, is neither afraid of death, nor torment, nor judgment, nor hell; because *perfect love*^d ministreth a confident access to GOD: But if a man take delight in sin, no wonder if he be afraid of death and judgment. Yet it were well, if love doth not yet withhold thee from sin, that at least the fear of Hell should restrain thee. But he that casts behind him the fear of GOD, cannot possibly persevere in any thing that is good, but must run headlong into the snares of the Devil.

CHAP. XXV.

Of Zeal in reforming the whole Course of our Lives.

BE watchful and diligent in the service of GOD; and often bethink thy self to what end and purpose thou camest hither; and why thou hast left the world. Was it not, that thou mightest live to GOD, and become a spiritual man? Wherefore set thy self with fervency and zeal to proceed and advance in all godliness and virtue,

^d 1 John iv. 18

because thou wilt shortly receive the recompence of thy labours: nor shall there then be fear any longer, or sorrow in thy coasts. Do but labour a little at present, and thou shalt surely find great rest, yea, everlasting joy. If thou abide faithful, and fervent in working, God doubtless will be faithful, and rich in recompensing. Thou oughtest to hold fast a good hope of obtaining the Crown: But thou must not flatter thy self with an absolute security; for fear of falling into sloth, or presumption.

II. A certain person that was in great doubts and perplexities about the state of his soul, and that was often fluctuating betwixt hope and fear, came one day to a Church, overwhelm'd with grief; prostrated himself in prayer before a certain Altar, and in an agony of spirit, said over and over again in his heart: *O that I knew for certain, that I was to persevere!* Whereupon he was immediately answer'd by the divine voice speaking within him: *And supposing thou didst know this for certain, what wouldest thou do? Do now what thou wouldest do then, and thou mayst be secure of thy persevering.* Comforted and stablished in heart by this reply, he immediately committed himself to the divine

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will,

will, and all his anxiety and wavering was at an end. Instead of indulging any curious enquiries into future events, as to the concerns of his soul; he apply'd himself to find out, what was the good and perfect will of God, in order to begin, and accomplish every good work.

III. *Put thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good, saith the Prophet: Dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed^b.* One thing there is, which discourages many from proficiencie and zeal in amending their life; namely, the dread of the difficulty, or the labour of the combat. And true it is, that they make the most eminent advancement in the virtues, who vigorously endeavour to overcome those things which are most grievous to them, and make the strongest opposition to their good desires. For a man makes so much the greater advance, and ⁱ obtains so much larger measures of grace, by how much the more he overcomes, and mortifies himself in the spirit.

IV. But all men do not alike labour under the same difficulties: Some have more, or less to master and mortify in themselves

^b Psal. xxxvii. 3 ⁱ In the Original Latin; *Merits so much larger measures of Grace,*

than others. Yet a diligent and zealous Proficient shall be able to advance farther, tho' he has more and stronger passions to struggle with, than another of a quieter, and more sedate temper, but less fervent in the pursuit of virtue. Two things there are, of mighty moment towards an entire and thorough reformation: Namely, to draw himself violently from that, which by nature he is viciously inclin'd to: And to labour with all his might to attain that virtue, which he chiefly wants. Be particularly careful also to avoid and subdue in thyself those things which are offensive to thee, and which thou condemnest most in others.

5. Turn all things to thy advantage, and let every thing minister to thee, wheresoever thou art, an occasion of improvement in virtue: For instance, if thou seest or hearest of any good examples or patterns, let these enkindle in thee an ardent desire of imitation: On the other hand, if thou observest any thing blame-worthy or misbecoming in another, beware of doing the same; or if thou hast at any time done it, be sure quickly to amend it. As thine eye observeth others, so again thou art observed and censured by them. How pleasant, how delightful a sight is it, to see Brethren in a Society, full of

fervour and devotion, well-behaved, and exactly observant in all the rules of order and discipline. And again, how offensive, how very shocking, to see them walking disorderly, and neglecting to discharge the obligations of that holy Estate whereunto they are called! O how dangerous, of what pernicious consequence is it, to forget the main end and design of their Vocation; and to engage their thoughts and time in matters not belonging to them, and altogether foreign to their Profession!

VI. Be mindful of the resolution thou hast taken up, and have before thine eyes continually the image of the crucified *Jesus*. Thou hast good reason to be ashamed and confounded upon viewing and considering the life of *Christ*; who hast hitherto taken so little care to render thy own life more conformable to his, tho' thou hast been a long time entred in the way of God. A Religious that exercises himself intently, and devoutly in the most holy life and Passion of his Lord, will find there all things useful and necessary for him, in great abundance; nor need he seek any thing out of, or better than *Jesus*. O if the crucified *Jesus* would come into our heart, how instantly, and sufficiently should we be taught!

VII. A zealous Recluse bears patiently, and performs readily whatsoever is commanded him. A negligent and lukewarm Recluse hath tribulation upon tribulation, and of all creatures is the most miserable; because he is destitute of the support of inward and spiritual comforts, and is forbid to have recourse to outward and worldly ones. A disorderly undisciplin'd Monastick hazards the safety of his soul, and is in great danger of an irrecoverable fall. He that would live more at large, and is always seeking relaxation and liberty, will find every thing too strait for him; because something or other will be always disagreeable to, and grating upon him.

VIII. How do so many other religious persons do, who live under the strictest discipline in their Cloisters and Convents? They live secluded from the world, go out but rarely, eat miserably, are cloathed coarsly, work much, talk little, watch late, rise early, pray long, and observe with utmost exactness all their duties. Consider the Carthusians, the Cistercians, and Monks and Nuns of several Orders; how every night they rise to chant the praises of God. And therefore it would be a shame for thee to be backward to, and cold and lukewarm in so
K 3 holy

holy an exercise, at a time when such multitudes of religious souls are joyfully met to celebrate the divine praises.

IX. O that we had nothing else to do, but with heart and mouth to praise the Lord our GOD! O if thou never stoodst in need of meat, drink, or sleep; but couldest always praise GOD, and attend spiritual exercises only! Then wouldest thou be incomparably happier than now, when thou art so often interrupted by the numerous infirmities and necessities of the body. Would to God these necessities were no more, but were changed all into spiritual repasts, and soul-refreshments, which now alas! we have but now and then a taste of.

X. When a man is come to this pitch, to seek consolation from no created thing, then first doth GOD begin to be perfectly relishing to him: Then also will he entertain with chearfulness and contentment every event befalling him. Then neither prosperity shall exalt him, nor the trifle of adversity deject him: But he fixes his heart entirely and confidently in GOD, who is to him all in all; with regard to whom nothing perisheth, nothing dieth, but all things live unto him, and are ever at beck, ever ready to be used and disposed according to the good pleasure of his will.

XI. Re-

XI. Remember evermore the end and upshot of things, and that time once lost, is irrecoverable. Without great pains and diligence thou shalt never acquire the virtues: From the moment thou beginnest to cool and flag in thy pursuit, thou shalt also feel an inward disorder, and unquietness of spirit. But if thou intend the concerns of thy soul with warmth and vigour, thou shalt find great peace, and perceive thy yoke to become easier, and thy burden lighter, partly through the grace and assistance of God, partly through thy own zeal and love of virtue. The fervent and diligent soul is ready prepared for all things. It is matter of greater travail and toil, to resist vices and passions, than to sweat at bodily labours. He that is not careful to avoid small miscarriages, will insensibly slide into greater. Thou shalt always have joy in the evening, if thou hast spent the day profitably. Watch over thy self, stir up thyself, admonish thy self; and whatever becomes of others, neglect not thy self. So much the greater advance shalt thou make, by how much the greater violence thou offerest to thy self. Amen.

The End of the First Book.

OF THE
IMITATION
OF
CHRIST.

BOOK II.

Admonitions drawing the Soul to
Internal Things.

CHAP. I.

Of the Internal Life.

I.  *HE Kingdom of God is within
you^s, saith the Lord; turn thee
with thy whole heart to the
Lord; and leave this miserable
world, and thy soul shall find rest. Learn*

^s Luke xvii. 21.

to

to despise exterior things, and to give thy self up to the interior, and thou shalt perceive the Kingdom of GOD to come into thee. *For the Kingdom of GOD is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost^b*, which is not given to the wicked. *Christ* will come unto thee, and shew thee his consolations, if thou prepare for him a worthy mansion within thee. All his glory, and beauty is from within, and there his delight is to be. He makes frequent visits to the internal man, holds sweet conferences with him, infuses his comforts into his heart, fills him with abundance of peace, and treats him with a most amazing familiarity.

II. Come on then, faithful Soul, prepare thy heart for this Bridegroom; to the end he may vouchsafe to come unto thee, and inhabit in thee. For thus he saith: *If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him^c*. Make room then for *Christ*, and deny entrance to all others. When thou hast *Christ*, thou art rich, and wantest nothing else. He will be thy purveyor, and faithful steward in all things, so as thou shalt not need to have

^b Rom. xiv. 17 ^c John xiv. 23.

any dependence upon, or expectations from men. For men change soon, and pass away in a moment: But *Christ* abideth for ever, and is a sure help even unto the end.

III. No great trust is to be put in a frail and mortal man, tho' he love thee, and be able to serve thee: Nor oughtest thou to be much concerned, if he sometimes cross and contradict thee. The very same persons that are for thee to day, may be against thee to morrow; and so on the other hand: For they are as changeable as the wind. Place thy whole trust in God, and let him be thy fear and thy love. *He will answer for thee*. He will espouse thy cause, and do what is best for thee. Thou hast here no continuing city; and wheresoever thou be, thou art a stranger and a sojourner: Nor shalt thou ever have rest, till thou art intimately united unto *Christ*.

IV. What is it then that thou art looking about for here below? For ease and repose? This, man, is not the place of thy rest. Heaven ought to be thy habitation, and all earthly things to be regarded no otherwise than as in thy passage thither. All

things pass away, and thou thy self together with them. Beware how thou fasten thy affections upon them; lest thou be caught, and perish. Let thy thoughts dwell with the Most Highest, and thy prayers be directed to *Christ* without ceasing. If thou hast not strength of mind to contemplate high and heavenly things, rest thy soul in the Passion of *Christ*, and take up thy habitation gladly in his sacred wounds. For if thou devoutly fly for sanctuary to the wounds and precious marks of *Jesus*, thou wilt perceive a marvellous strength and comfort in tribulation: Nor wilt thou value much the flouts and despisings of men, and wilt bear with easiness and temper words of calumny and detraction.

V. *Christ* was also in this world despised of men; and in his greatest necessity forsaken by his friends and acquaintance amidst reproaches and obloquies. *Christ* was pleased to suffer, and to be despised; and darest thou to complain of any one? *Christ* had adversaries, slanderers and gainfayers, and wilt thou have all men thy friends and benefactors? How should thy patience be crowned, if thou meet with no crosses? If thou wilt suffer no adversity, how canst thou be a friend of *Christ*? Suffer with *Christ*,
and

and for Christ, if thou wouldest reign with *Christ*.

VI. If thou hadst once perfectly entred into the secrets of *Iesus*, and hadst had but a moderate taste of his ardent love; then wouldest thou be altogether indifferent as to any convenience, or inconvenience of thy own: Or rather, thou wouldest rejoyce in slanders and reproaches cast upon thee; because the love of *Iesus* hath this virtue in it, to make a man despise himself. A lover of *Iesus*, and of the truth, and a true internal man, and one disengaged from inordinate affections, can at any time freely turn to God, and raise himself in spirit above himself, and enjoy a heavenly repose in the fruition of his beloved.

VII. The man that has a right sense, and a just and true notion of things, as they are in themselves, not as they are called or esteemed; this man is truly wise, and taught rather of God, than of men. He that knows how to walk inwardly, and setteth little by external things, requireth not particular places, nor expecteth set times for the performing of religious exercises. The spiritually-minded, or internal man soon recollecteth himself; because he never gives himself an entire loose to exterior things.

Bodily

Bodily labour, or business, which may be necessary for the time, is no hindrance to him; but as things happen, so he suits himself unto them. He that is well disposed and regulated within, is nothing disturb'd with the strange unaccountable perverseness of other mens humours and behaviour. Every man finds more or less obstruction and vexation, as he engages more or less in the things of the world.

VIII. If thou wert in right order, and thoroughly cleans'd and purified, every accident would turn to thy good, and spiritual advancement. For this reason many things displease thee, and often give thee disquiet, because thou art not yet perfectly dead unto thy self, nor separated and divorc'd from all earthly things. Nothing so defiles and intangles the heart of man, as an impure love of the creatures. If thou refuse to be comforted outwardly, thou shalt be in a capacity to speculate heavenly things, and oftentimes to be ravish'd and transported in the inner man.

CHAP. II.

Of Humble Submission.

I. **V**ALUE not much who is for thee, or against thee: But let this be thy principal care and endeavour, that GOD may be with thee in every thing thou doest. Preserve a good conscience, and GOD will be thy sovereign and most effectual defence. For whom GOD is pleased to protect, no malice of man shall be able to hurt. If thou canst suffer with silence and patience, thou shalt infallibly see the salvation of the Lord. He knows the season, and manner of delivering thee; and therefore thou oughtest to resign thy self to him. It is for GOD to aid and to deliver from all shame and confusion. It is often of huge service towards the working and preserving in us greater humility, that other men know, and reproach us for our failings.

II. When a man humbles himself for his defects, he then easily appeases others, and makes no difficulty to give satisfaction to those who are offended with him. The humble man GOD protects, and delivers: The humble man he loves, and comforts:

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To the humble he inclines himself: To the humble he gives a larger portion of grace, and after his self-abasement exalts him to glory. To the humble he reveals his secrets, and sweetly draws and invites him to himself with the cords of love. The humble man receives reproach and affronts without any great disturbance to his peace; because his hope and dependence is in God, and not in the world. Count not thy self to have made any proficiencie, till thou think thy self the least and lowest of all mortals.

CHAP. III.

Of the good and peaceable Man.

I SECURE the peace of thy own breast in the first place; and then shalt thou be able to reconcile and make peace among others. A quiet peaceable man is more useful, than a learned man. A passionate contentious man turns even good into evil, and easily believes ill of others. The good and peaceable man makes a fair and kind interpretation of all things. The soul that is established in peace, has
no

no jealousy, or suspicion of any body: But the discontented, and turbulent person is tossed and tormented with a thousand suspicions; and is neither at rest himself; nor suffers other people to be so. He often speaketh that which he ought not to speak; and omitteth doing what were more expedient for him to do. He is a diligent observer of his neighbour's duty, and in the mean time negligent of his own. First therefore let thy zeal be exercis'd upon thy self; and thy own manners; and then thou mayst with reason extend it to thy neighbour.

II. Thou art expert enough at excusing and colouring thy own actions, but art not willing to admit the excuses of others. It were more just and reasonable for thee to accuse thy self, and to excuse thy brother. If thou wouldst be born with thy self, bear also with others. Consider how far thou art still from true charity, and humility; which knows not how to be angry, or displeas'd with any one but itself only. To keep up a good understanding with men of goodness and temper, is no great matter: For this is naturally pleasing unto all, and every one desires peace and quiet, and is fond of those who fall in, and agree with him. But with the churlish, and the perverse, or with
the

disorderly and undisciplin'd, or such as are ever thwarting and opposing us; to be able to live peaceably with these, shews a high degree of grace, and is an exceeding commendable and heroick attainment.

III. Some there are that keep peace with themselves, and with others also. And there are some who are neither at peace with themselves, nor suffer others to be so: They are a torment to others, but a greater torment always to themselves. And there are a third sort, who preserve themselves in peace, and make it their business to restore peace unto others. Yet after all, our whole peace, in this wretched and miserable life, must be concluded to consist rather in meek and humble suffering, than in an exemption from adversities and troubles. The man that hath learnt to suffer best, shall possess his soul in the greatest peace. Such a person is conquerour of himself, and master of the world, a friend of *Christ*, and an heir of Heaven.

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CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of Purity of Heart, and Simplicity of Intention.

I. **T**HERE are two wings upon which man soars above earthly things; and those are Simplicity, and Purity. Simplicity must be in the intention, Purity in the affection. Simplicity intends and reaches after God; Purity takes hold of, and tastes him. No good action will be troublesome or painful to thee, if thou art inwardly free from all inordinate affection. And if thou hast no other aim of life, but to please God, and to benefit thy neighbour, thou shalt surely enjoy this inward freedom. If thy heart were right within thee, then the whole Creation would be as a glass to thee to contemplate the Creator in, and as a book of holy instruction to regulate thy life by. There is no creature so mean and despicable, but it represents the goodness of God.

II. If thou wert inwardly good, and pure, then wouldest thou see all things without lett or hindrance, and fully comprehend them. A pure heart penetrates Heaven, and Hell. Such as a man is in his inward frame and dispo-

disposition of mind, such is his judgment of outward things. If there be such a thing as joy in this world, the pure in heart infallibly possess it. Again, if there be tribulation and anguish to be found any where, no one is better acquainted with it than the guilty conscience. As iron being cast into the fire is scoured from its rust, and becomes all bright and sparkling: So the man that turns entirely to GOD, is deliver'd from all his sloth and numbness; and is transform'd into a new man.

III. When a man begins to grow lukewarm, then he boggles at a small difficulty, and gladly admits outward consolation. But when he begins to gain a perfect conquest over himself, and to walk manfully in the way of God; then he makes nothing of those things, which before seem'd grievous to him.

CHAP. V.

Of the Consideration of one's self.

WE cannot have any mighty confidence in our selves; because we many times want both grace and understanding.

derstanding. The light within us is but dim and feeble, and even this we quickly extinguish by our negligence. Oftentimes also we are not sensible, how exceeding blind we are inwardly. We often act ill, and excuse it worse. We are sometimes pushed on by passion, and mistake it for zeal. We censure small faults in others, and pass over much greater in our selves. We are ready enough to resent, and to scan exactly, what we suffer at the hands of others; but how much they suffer from us, we consider not. Let but a man well and impartially examin his own actions, and he will see little reason to judge hardly of another.

II. The man that walketh inwardly prefers the care of himself before all other cares; and he that is strictly watchful over himself, finds no difficulty in forbearing to talk of other people. Thou wilt never be an internal, that is, a truly spiritual and devout man, till thou hast learnt to be silent as to other mens affairs, and to regard thy self principally. If thou attendest wholly unto God and thyself, what thou seest and hearest abroad, will very little affect thee. Where art thou, when thou art not with thyself? And when thou hast run over all things, if thou hast forgot thy self, wherein art thou profited?

profited? If thou wouldest have peace of heart, and true union with GOD, thou must throw all other things behind thee, and keep thy self only in view.

III. Thou shalt therefore profit much, if thou keep thy self free from the care of all temporal things. On the other hand, thou wilt lose ground exceedingly, if thou value any thing that is temporal. Let nothing appear to thee great, nothing high, nothing pleasant, nothing worth desiring, but purely GOD, or the things that be of GOD. Count it all vain, whatsoever consolation cometh from any creature. A soul enamour'd of GOD, despiseth all things short of GOD. The eternal and infinite GOD alone, that filleth all things, is the comfort of the soul, and true joy of the heart.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Joy of a good Conscience

I. **T**HE glory of a good man, is the testimony of a good conscience. Keep a good conscience, and thou shalt ever have

joy. A good conscience is able to bear a great deal, and is very chearful in the midst of crosses and afflictions. An evil conscience is always full of fear, and disquietude. Thou shalt enjoy a sweet repose and tranquillity of spirit, if thy heart reproach thee not. Never rejoice, except only when thou hast done well. The sinner hath never any true joy, nor taste of inward peace: Because *there is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord*. And if they should say, *we are in peace; there shall no evil come upon us; and who shall dare to hurt us?* believe them not; for the fury of the Lord shall rise up all of a sudden against them, and all their devices shall vanish like smoke, and their thoughts shall perish with them.

II. *To glory in tribulation*^b, is no difficult thing to the lover; for so to glory, *is to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*^c. Short is that glory, which men give and receive from one another. The glory of the world is always accompanied with sadness. The glory of good men lies in their own consciences, and not in the mouth of men. The joy of the just is from God, and

^a Isa. lvii. 21.^b Rom. v. 3.^c Gal. vi. 14.

in God: And their rejoicing is founded upon truth. The man that desireth true and eternal glory, values not that which is temporal. And the man that seeketh temporal glory, or that despises it not from his heart, gives a sufficient proof of his not loving, as he ought, that which is heavenly and eternal. Great peace and tranquillity of heart is the portion of that man, who is moved neither with praises nor dispraises.

III. The man whose conscience is clean and pure, is contented in any condition; and calm and composed under any treatment. Thou art not the holier, for being praised; nor the less valuable for being vilified. What thou art, that art thou; neither can the world make thee greater, than what thou art in the sight of God. If thou attend to what thou art in thy self inwardly, thou wilt not care what men say of thee. Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord *looketh on the heart*^d. Man considereth the action, but God weigheth the intention. To be always doing well, and to think meanly of his own performances, is an argument of an humble soul. To refuse

^d 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

to be comforted by any created thing, is a mark of singular purity, and of an internal assurance.

IV. The man that seeketh not any outward testimony for himself, gives a manifest proof of his having committed himself wholly to God. *For not he that commendeth himself, is approved* (saith blessed Paul,) *but whom the Lord commendeth*^c. To walk with God inwardly, and not to be taken up with any desire or affection outwardly; this is the state of the internal man.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Love of Jesus above all things.

I. **B**lessed is the man that understandeth what it is to love *Jesus*, and to despise himself for the sake of *Jesus*. Thou must quit whatever thou lovest for this Beloved; because *Jesus* requires us to love him alone above all things. The Love of the creature is deceitful and unstable: The Love of *Jesus* is faithful, and eternal. He

^c 2 Cor. x. 18.

that cleaveth to the creature, shall fall with that which is subject to fall: He that embraceth *Jesus*, shall stand firm for ever. Love him, and keep him thy friend, who, tho' all the world leave thee, will not forsake thee, not suffer thee finally to perish. Thou must some time or other be separated from all, whether thou wilt or no.

II. Keep close to *Jesus*, living and dying: And commit thy self to his faithfulness, who, when all fail, can alone help thee. Thy Beloved is of such a nature, that he will not admit of a rival or competitor with him, but will himself have the sole possession of thy heart, and sit as King in his own throne. If thou couldst empty thy self entirely of all created things, *Jesus* would willingly come and dwell with thee. Whatsoever Love or regard thou shalt allow to any thing out of *Jesus*, will be found in a manner perfectly lost and thrown away. Trust not to, nor lean upon a reed shaken with the wind: *For all flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof shall wither away as the flower of the field.*

III. Thou wilt quickly be deceived, if

thou judge of men by outward show and appearance only. For if thou seek thy consolation and interest in others, thou wilt most commonly be disappointed, and experience the quite contrary. If in all thy ways thou seek *Jesus*, thou shalt most infallibly find *Jesus*. But if thou seek thy self, thou shalt find thy self indeed, but to thy own destruction. For a man does himself more mischief, if he seek not *Jesus*, than the whole world, and all his enemies together could ever bring upon him.

CHAP. VIII.

Of intimate Conversation and Friendship with Jesus.

I **W**HEN *Jesus* is present, all is well, and nothing seems difficult: But when *Jesus* is not present, every thing is hard. When *Jesus* speaketh not inwardly, poor and miserable is our comfort: But let *Jesus* speak one word only, and a marvelous consolation presently springeth up and diffuseth itself throughout the heart. Did not *Mary Magdalene* immediately arise from the place where she wept, when *Martha*

tha said unto her, *The Master is come and calleth for thee?* Happy the hour when *Jesus* calleth from tears to the joy of the Spirit! How dry and barren art thou without *Jesus*! How unwise and vain, if thou seek any thing out of *Jesus*! Is not this a greater loss, than if thou shouldst lose the whole world?

II. What can the world profit thee without *Jesus*? To be without *Jesus* is an insupportable Hell; and to be with *Jesus* a ravishing Paradise. If *Jesus* be with thee, no enemy will be able to hurt thee. He that findeth *Jesus*, findeth a good treasure, yea, a good that surpasseth all goods. And he that loseth *Jesus*, loseth exceeding much, even more than the whole world. He is the poorest man in the world that liveth without *Jesus*, and he the richest that standeth well with *Jesus*.

III. It is a great art to know how to converse with *Jesus*; and great wisdom to know how to keep *Jesus*. Be humble and peaceable, and *Jesus* will be with thee. Be devout and quiet, and *Jesus* will stay with thee. Thou mayst soon drive away *Jesus* and lose his favour, if thou turn aside to

▪ John xi. 28.

outward things. And if thou hast once chas'd away and lost him, unto whom wilt thou fly, and what friend wilt thou then seek? Without a friend thou canst not live comfortably; and if *Jesus* be not thine especial friend above all others, thou wilt be exceeding sad and desolate. Wherefore thou dost foolishly, if thou place thy confidence or joy in any other. It is more eligible to have the enmity of the whole world, than the displeasure of *Jesus*. Of all therefore that may be dear unto thee, let *Jesus* alone be thy peculiar and chiefest Beloved.

IV. Love all mankind for the sake of *Jesus*, and *Jesus* for the sake of himself. It is *Jesus Christ* alone that ought to be loved without reserve, and without measure, because he alone infinitely surpasses in goodness and faithfulness all others that you can possibly love. For him, and in him, let thine enemies as well as friends be dear unto thee: And for all those he is to be prayed to, to the end all may know and love him. Never covet the extraordinary praise or love of men, because this is God's peculiar alone, who hath none like unto himself: Neither do thou desire that any one's affections may be fix'd upon, and taken up
with

with thee; nor be thou thy self taken up with the love of any one; but let *Jesus* be in thee, and in every good man.

V. Be pure and free in thy inner man, and wholly disengaged from all creaturely intanglements. Thou must be entirely strip'd of all spiritual incumbrances, and carry a clean and pure heart towards God, if thou wouldst be at liberty to see and taste how sweet the Lord is. But certain it is thou wilt never arrive at this blessed estate, unless thou be prevented and inwardly drawn by his grace; to the end thy heart having empty'd itself, and taken its final leave of all the creatures, thou mayst become one with him, and he with thee. For when the grace of God visiteth a man, then is he enabled to do all things. And when it is withdrawn, then again he is poor and destitute, naked and feeble, is left to the scourge and lash of every adversity, and becomes as it were the sport of affliction. When this is his case, he ought not to be dejected, nor to lose hope; but to resign with evenness and calmness of spirit to the will of God; and whatsoever happens unto him, to bear it out manfully for the glory of *Jesus Christ*: Because summer succeeds winter, day comes again after night,
and

and storms are hushed into a profound calm.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Absence of all Comfort.

I. IT is no hard matter to despise human comfort, when we have divine: But it is a great, yea a very great attainment, to be able to want both human and divine comfort at once; and for the glory of God willingly to bear desertion, and desolation of heart; and to seek himself in nothing, nor to entertain the least thought of his own merit. What extraordinary thing is it, if thou art chearful, and devout, whilst the light of God's countenance is lifted up upon thee: This is an hour welcome unto all. Smooth and pleasant is his journey, whom the grace of God conducts and carries. And what wonder, if he feel no burden, who is strengthened and supported by the Almighty, and led by the sovereign Guide?

II. We would gladly have some exterior consolation; and it is with pain and difficulty that a man divests himself of himself. *St. Laurence* the Martyr overcame the world,
in

in trampling under foot all its charms, and pleasures, and in surmounting also the affection he bore to his good Bishop, whilst for the love of *Christ*, he patiently endured to be separated from Pope *Sixtus*, whom he loved with an entire affection, and who was carried to execution without him. Thus his love of the Creator surmounted his love of the man; and all human consolation yielded to the divine will. In like manner do thou also learn to abandon, for the love of God, any the most intimate, and dearest friend. And be not overmuch concerned neither, when thou art forsaken of a friend; as knowing that we must all sooner or later be separated from one another.

III. A man must have long and sharp conflicts with himself, before he learn entirely to subdue himself, and to fix all his affections upon God. So long as a man rests upon himself and his own strength, he easily warps to human consolations. But a true lover of *Christ*, and a zealous pursuer of the virtues, steps not aside to these comforts, nor seeks such sensible sweetnesses and delightful relishes; but finds a pleasure rather in the severer exercises of mortification and self-denial, and delights to under-

go great difficulties and hardships for the sake of *Christ*.

IV. When therefore God sends down spiritual consolation, receive it with thankfulness; but know withal that it is the gift of God, not thy own merit. Be not lifted up; rejoice not over much, nor vainly presume: But become rather the more humble for the gift, the more watchful also and fearful in all thy deportment; because that happy hour will pass away, and be succeeded by temptation. When consolation is withdrawn, do not presently despond, but with humility and patience wait the heavenly visitation; because God is able to restore to thee again more abundant consolation. This is no new nor strange thing to those that have experience in the way of God; for the ancient Prophets, and the greatest Saints have still found in themselves this interchange of consolation and desertion.

V. Whereupon the Royal Prophet (during the presence of grace) express'd himself thus; *In my prosperity, I said, I shall never be cast down*^a. But as soon as grace was withdrawn, upon the experience of

^a Psal. xxx. 6, &c.

what he found in himself, he adds: *Thou didst turn thy face from me and I was troubled.* Yet in this disconsolate state he by no means despairs, but addressees himself to God with more earnestness, and faith: *Unto thee, O Lord, will I cry, and I will make my supplication unto my God.* Lastly, he receives the fruit of his prayer, and declares that he was heard, saying: *The Lord hath heard me, and hath had mercy upon me: The Lord is become my helper.* But wherein? *Thou hast turned, faith he, my mourning into joy, and hast compassed me about with gladness.* If those great Saints have been so dealt withal, we poor feeble wretches should not despond, if we find ourselves, sometimes in a state of zeal and fervour, sometimes in a state of coldness and indifferency: Because the Spirit cometh and goeth according to the good pleasure of his will. Whence blessed *Job* saith: *Thou visitest him in the morning, and all of a sudden thou provest him^a.*

VI. In what therefore can I hope, or wherein ought I to put my confidence, except only in the great mercy of God, and in the hope alone of heavenly grace? For

^a Job. vii. 18.

go great difficulties and hardships for the sake of *Christ*.

IV. When therefore God sends down spiritual consolation, receive it with thankfulness; but know withal that it is the gift of God, not thy own merit. Be not lifted up; rejoice not over much, nor vainly presume: But become rather the more humble for the gift, the more watchful also and fearful in all thy deportment; because that happy hour will pass away, and be succeeded by temptation. When consolation is withdrawn, do not presently despond, but with humility and patience wait the heavenly visitation; because God is able to restore to thee again more abundant consolation. This is no new nor strange thing to those that have experience in the way of God; for the ancient Prophets, and the greatest Saints have still found in themselves this interchange of consolation and desertion.

V. Whereupon the Royal Prophet (during the presence of grace) express'd himself thus: *In my prosperity, I said, I shall never be cast down*^a. But as soon as grace was withdrawn, upon the experience of

^a Psal. xxx. 6, &c.

what he found in himself, he adds: *Thou didst turn thy face from me and I was troubled.* Yet in this disconsolate state he by no means despairs, but addressees himself to GOD with more earnestness, and saith: *Unto thee, O Lord, will I cry, and I will make my supplication unto my God.* Lastly, he receives the fruit of his prayer, and declares that he was heard, saying: *The Lord hath heard me, and hath had mercy upon me: The Lord is become my helper.* But wherein? *Thou hast turned, saith he, my mourning into joy, and hast compassed me about with gladness.* If those great Saints have been so dealt withal, we poor feeble wretches should not despond, if we find ourselves, sometimes in a state of zeal and fervour, sometimes in a state of coldness and indifferency: Because the Spirit cometh and goeth according to the good pleasure of his will. Whence blessed *Job* saith: *Thou visitest him in the morning, and all of a sudden thou provest him^a.*

VI. In what therefore can I hope, or wherein ought I to put my confidence, except only in the great mercy of GOD, and in the hope alone of heavenly grace? For

^a Job. vii. 18.

the conversation of good and devout men, the company of faithful friends, the entertainment of holy books, and heavenly discourses, the melody of voice and instrument, and the raptures of Psalms and Hymns; all these things avail little, have little relish, when I am deserted by grace, and abandoned to the poverty and deadness of my own dry and barren heart. At such a season the only remedy is patience, and a renouncing of my self in a perfect submission to the will of God.

VII. I never yet met with any man so religious and devout, but he sometimes found a withdrawing of grace, or was sensible of an abatement of fervour. Never was there Saint so highly rapt and illuminated, but first or last he was tempted. For he is not worthy the sublime and rapturous contemplation of GOD, who for the sake of GOD hath not been exercised with some tribulation. For a preceding temptation is wont to be the sign of an ensuing consolation: And such only as have been proved by temptations have a promise of this heavenly consolation. *To him that overcometh, saith he, will I give to eat of the tree of life^b.*

^b Rev. ii. 7.

VIII. Now to this end divine consolation is given, that a man may be the more courageous to endure afflictions. And temptation, or affliction, therefore follows, that he may not be elevated with the blessing. The Devil sleepeth not, nor is the flesh yet dead: Wherefore prepare thy self incessantly for the combat; since thou art beset, on the right and on the left, with enemies which are never at rest.

CHAP. X.

Of Thankfulness for the Grace of God.

I. **W**HY seekest thou rest, since thou art *born to labour and trouble*^a. Prepare thy heart for patience, rather than for consolations, and for bearing of the Cross, rather than for the receiving of joy and satisfaction. For who even of the worldly-minded would not be glad of spiritual joy and consolation, if he could always command it; since spiritual consolations far surpass all worldly delights, and sensual pleasures? For all the delights of

^a Job v. 7.

the world are either vain, or base. But spiritual delights alone are pleasant and honest, the fruits of virtue, and infus'd by God into chaste and pure souls. But those divine consolations no man can always enjoy at pleasure, because our truces with temptation are but of short continuance.

II. One of the grand obstacles of this supernal visitation is a false mistaken liberty of soul, and a presumptuous confidence in her own strength and goodness. God is exceeding good in giving the grace of consolation: But man is exceeding base in not rendring back all again to God, with acknowledgment and thanksgiving. And for this reason the gifts of grace are stopt, and cannot flow freely in our souls, because we are ungrateful to their author, and refund them not again, in thankfulness, to their spring-head and original source. For grace is evermore due to the truly thankful; and from the proud shall be taken away, what is wont to be given to the humble.

III. I am not for consolation that robs me of compunction; nor am I fond of contemplation that puffeth up into pride and presumption. For every thing which is high, is not holy; nor every thing that is palatable, wholesome; nor every desire, pure; nor

nor every thing that is agreeable to man, pleasing to GOD. Welcome, thrice-welcome that grace, whereby I am still render'd more humble, am kept more in fear, and become more ready to relinquish and renounce my self. A man practis'd and experienc'd in the gift of grace, and that hath passed under the discipline and chastisement of the withdrawings thereof, will never dare to ascribe any thing of good to himself; but rather will acknowledge himself poor and naked. *Render to GOD the things that are GOD's*, and take to thy self what is properly thy own: That is to say, render thanks to GOD for his grace; and know, that his is the honour for what thou hast done well, thine only the blame and just punishment for what thou hast done amiss.

IV. Set thy self always in the lowest place, and the highest shall be given thee: For the loftier the building, the deeper must be the foundation. The greatest Saints in GOD's esteem, are the least in their own; and by how much the more glorious, by so much the more humble in themselves. Those that are filled with true heavenly glory, have no room for vain-glory: Being rooted and grounded in GOD, they are not in a possibility of being elevated. And those

that ascribe wholly to God whatever good they have received, *seek not honour one of another*, but *the honour only that cometh from God alone*^b; and study to magnify God in themselves, and in all his Saints, above all things, and are ever directing their actions to that end.

V. Be thankful therefore for the least favours, and thou shalt be thought worthy to receive greater. Let the least be unto thee even as the greatest; and the most inconsiderable gift be esteemed as an extraordinary and singular one. If the worthiness of the giver be considered, no gift will seem small, or of little value. For nothing is small that is given by the supreme Lord of all. Even stripes and punishments from his hands ought to be welcome: Because whatever he permits to come upon us, is intended for our good, and to promote our salvation. He that is desirous to retain and keep the grace of God, must be thankful for the grace that is given him, and patient when it is withdrawn. Let him pray for the return of it, and be ever humble, and upon his guard, that he lose it no more.

^b John v. 44.

CHAP. XI.

*Of the small Number of the Lovers of
Jesus's Cross.*

I. **J**ESUS hath now-a-days many lovers of his heavenly Kingdom, but few bearers of his Cross. He hath many that are fond of his consolations, but few are willing to share in his tribulations. He finds companions enow of his table, but few of his abstinence and fasting. All are desirous to rejoice with *Jesus*, but few are willing to suffer any thing for him. Many follow *Jesus* as far as *the breaking of bread*, but few to the drinking the cup of his Passion. Many reverence his miracles, but few follow the ignominy of his Cross. Many love *Jesus*, so long as they meet with no adversity and afflictions. Many praise and bless him, so long as they receive any consolations from him. But if *Jesus* hide his face, and leave them but a while, they fall either into complaints, or into grievous dejection and despondency of mind.

II. But they who love *Jesus*, for the sake of *Jesus*, and not for the sake of any private consolation of their own, bless him in every tribulation, and anguish of heart, just in the same manner and degree, as in

the highest and most ravishing consolation. And tho' he should never please to give them consolation, yet would they ever praise him, ever give him thanks.

III. O the mighty power of the pure love of *Jesus*, unadulterated, unmix'd with any private interest, or self-love! Do they not all deserve the name of mercenaries and hirelings, who are ever seeking consolations and comforts? Do they not give an evident proof that they are lovers of themselves rather than of *Jesus*, who are always casting about for their own conveniences, advantages and gains? Where is the man that would be willing to *serve* God for nought?

IV. Seldom is there found any one to that degree refined and spiritualized, as to strip himself bare of all worldly comforts, and to be contentedly reduced to the last degree of nakedness. For a true *poor in spirit*, that is, one perfectly and entirely emptied of all love and affection to the creatures, who can find? Verily he is a *pearl of inestimable price*^b, and worthy to be sought to the utmost ends of the earth. *If a man shall give away all the substance of his house*^c, yet is it nothing. And tho'

^a Job. i. 9.

^b Prov. xxi. 10.

^c Cantic. viii. 7.

he mortify himself by a severe penitence, yet this is but a low and inconsiderable thing. And tho' he had attained to all knowledge, yet still he is far short. And tho' he were a man of bright and eminent virtues, and of an ardent and exalted devotion, a great deal notwithstanding is still behind; namely one thing, which is absolutely necessary for him. What is that? After he has renounc'd all things, to renounce himself, and to go wholly and entirely out of himself, and not to retain or reserve the least relick of self-love. And when he has done all things that he knows to be his duty to do, to think he has done nothing.

V. Let him set little value upon those attainments, which the world possibly may highly esteem: But let him in truth and sincerity pronounce himself *an unprofitable servant*, as Truth it self saith: *When ye have done all things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants*^d. Then shall he be truly *poor* and naked in *spirit*, and be able to say with the Prophet: *I am poor and desolate*^e. Yet there's none more rich, none more powerful, none more

^d Luke xvii. 10.^e Psal. xxv. 15.

free, than such a man who is able to renounce himself and all things, and to humble himself to the lowest degree of abasement.

CHAP. XII.

Of the High Way of the Holy Cross.

I. **T**HIS seemeth a hard saying to many: *Deny thy self, take up thy Cross, and follow Jesus^a*. But it will be much harder, to hear that last sentence pronounced: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire^b*. For they who now chearfully hear, and follow the word of the Cross; shall not then be afraid of hearing the word of *eternal damnation*. This banner of the Cross shall be display'd in Heaven, when our Lord cometh to judge the world. Then all the servants of the Cross, who had conformed their lives to their crucified Saviour, shall draw to *Christ* the Judge with great confidence.

II. Why art thou afraid then to take up the Cross, which leads directly to a King-

^a John vi. 16.

Mat. xvi. 24.

^b Mat. xxv. 41.

dom?

dom? In the Cross is found health, in the Cross life, in the Cross a protection from our enemies, in the Cross an infusion of the sweets of Heaven, in the Cross strength of soul, in the Cross the joy of the spirit, in the Cross the sum of virtue, in the Cross the perfection of holiness. There is no salvation of the soul, nor hope of eternal life but in the Cross. Take up thy Cross therefore, and follow *Jesus*, and thou shalt go into life everlasting. He led the way before thee, bearing his own Cross; and died for thee upon the Cross; to the end thou mightest both carry thy own Cross, and desire to die upon the Cross. *For if thou be dead with him, thou shalt also live with him: And if thou partake of his sufferings, thou shalt also share of his glory.*

III. Behold all consisteth in the Cross, and all dependeth upon dying to our selves; and there is no other way to life, and to true internal peace, except that one of the holy Cross, and of daily mortification. Go where thou wilt, search where thou wilt, and thou wilt not find a sublimer way above, nor a securer way below, than that of the holy Cross. Dispose and order all things ac-

according to thy own pleasure and fancy; and thou wilt still be sure to find something that thou must necessarily suffer, either willingly or unwillingly: And so thou shalt always find a Cross. For either thou shalt feel pain in thy body, or suffer tribulation of spirit in thy soul.

IV. Sometimes thou shalt be in discomfort by reason of spiritual desertions, sometimes a neighbour shall exercise thy patience; and, which is worse, many times thou wilt be a burden to thy self, without being able to find any remedy, or even mitigation of thy unaccountable heaviness; but so long as God sees fit, bear it thou must. For it is the good pleasure of God, that thou learn to bear tribulation without consolation, to the end thou mayst both submit thy self wholly to his will, and become also more humble by tribulation. No man hath so cordial, so piercing a sense and feeling of the Passion of *Christ*, as he that hath happened to suffer the like himself. The Cross therefore is always ready at hand, and every where awaits thee. Thou canst not escape it, whithersoever thou runnest: Because go where thou wilt, thou carriest thy self along with thee, and wilt ever meet with thy self. Which way soever thou
turn

turn thy self, whether to the things above, or to the things below; whether to the things without thee, or to the things within thee; in all these thou wilt be sure to find the Cross: and it is necessary for thee every where and in all things to possess thy soul in patience, if thou mean to have inward peace, and to^f obtain a never-fading Crown.

V. If thou bear the Cross willingly and chearfully, it shall bear thee, and carry thee to thy desired end; even to the place where there shall be an end of suffering, tho' here there shall not. If thou bear it unwillingly and with reluctancy, thou addest to the burden, and gallest thy self the more; and yet notwithstanding bear it thou must. If thou cast off one Cross, doubtless thou shalt find another, and that perhaps a heavier too.

VI. Thinkest thou to escape what no mortal living ever was exempted from? Who among the Saints pass'd the time of his sojourning here without tribulation? For as for *Jesus Christ* our Lord and Master, he was not one single hour of his whole life free from the pain of suffering. Himself hath told us, that *it behoved him to suffer, and to rise again the third day, and so to enter*

^f In the Original *Latin*; *To merit a never fading Crown*

into his glory. And why seekest thou any other Road, than this high and royal Road, even that of the holy Cross?

VII. the holy life of *Christ* was one continued Cross and martyrdom; and dost thou seek rest and joy? Thou art deceived, thou art deceived, man, if thou seekest, or expectest any other thing than to suffer tribulations; because this whole mortal life is full of miseries, and signed all round with Crosses. And by how much the higher a man is advanced in the spiritual life, by so much the sorer crosses he frequently meets with; because the punishment of his exile encreases in proportion to his love.

VIII. But this man thus manifoldly afflicted, is not without an alleviating consolation; because he is sensible of the mightiest advantage accruing to him from the sufferance of his Cross. For whilst he meekly and voluntarily submits to it, all his load of tribulation is converted into an assurance of divine consolation. And by how much the flesh is more batter'd and weakned by affliction, by so much is the spirit more corroborated and strengthen'd by inward grace. Nay, sometimes he becomes so robust, and

is fortified to that degree, through a love of tribulation and adversity springing from an affectionate desire of being conform'd to the Cross of *Christ*, that he would not willingly be without pain and tribulation; because he believes himself so much the more acceptable and dear to GOD, by how much the more and sorer afflictions he is able to endure for his sake. This is not an effect of human strength, but of the grace of *Christ*, which worketh so powerfully in frail flesh, that what it naturally ever abhors and flees, the same through fervour of spirit it attempts and loves.

IX. It is not in meer man to carry the Cross, to love and delight in the Cross, to buffet his body, and to bring it into absolute subjection: To fly honours, to bear affronts contentedly, to despise himself, and to wish to be despised by others: To bear all manner of adversities, losses, and misfortunes with constancy and temper, and not to desire any prosperity in this world. If thou hast regard to, and dependest upon thyself, thou shalt be able to do nothing of all this by thine own natural powers. But if thou puttest thy trust in the Lord, strength shall be given thee from Heaven, and the world and the flesh shall be made subject unto

unto thee. No, nor shalt thou need to fear thine enemy the Devil neither, if thou art armed with faith, and guarded with the Cross of *Christ*.

X. Dispose thy self therefore like a good and faithful servant of *Christ*, to bear manfully the Cross of thy Lord and Master, who was crucified for thee out of very love. Prepare thy self to endure many adversities, and sundry troubles and inconveniences in this miserable life: Because so it will be with thee wheresoever thou art; and so thou wilt certainly find it, wheresoever thou hide thy self. Thus it must be; and there is no way to escape evils and calamities, and no remedy but patience. Drink of the Lord's cup heartily and affectionately, if thou desire to be a friend of his, and to have a part and portion with him. As for consolations and comforts, leave them to GOD; let him do with them, as it seemeth best unto him. But do thou dispose and prepare thy self to endure tribulations, and account them the greatest consolations; because *the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in thee^b*; No, not altho' thou shouldst suffer them all thy self alone.

^b Rom. viii. 18.

XI. When thou art arrived at this pitch, that tribulation is become sweet and relishing unto thee for the sake of *Christ*; then count it to be well with thee, for thou hast found a Paradise upon earth. As long as it is grievous unto thee to suffer, and that thou endeavourest to fly it; so long shalt thou be ill at ease; and the tribulation thou flyest will follow and haunt thee every where.

XII. But if thou set thy self (as thou oughtest) to answer the Vocation whereto thou wert called, which is that of suffering, and dying to thy self, thou wilt quickly be in a better way, and wilt find rest to thy soul. Hadst thou been rapt up into the third Heavens with *St. Paul*, thou wouldst not therefore have any security or exemption from troubles and sufferings. *I (saith Jesus) will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake^c.* A suffering state therefore is thy portion, if thou resolve to love *Jesus*, and to live and dye in his service.

XIII. O that thou wert worthy to suffer any thing for the name of *Jesus*! What glory would this bring to thy self! What joy and triumph to the Saints and Angels!

^c Acts ix. 16.

What edification and benefit to all thy brethren! For all extol patience, tho' few at the same time are willing to suffer. Well mightest thou be content to suffer a little for *Christ*, since many undergo much sorer hardships for the world.

XIV. Be assured of this as an infallible truth, that it is thy duty to lead a mortified life. And by how much the more any one dyes to himself, so much the more doth he begin to live to God. No man is qualified to comprehend heavenly things, till he hath beat down and subdued himself to the bearing of adversities for the sake of *Christ*. Nothing is more acceptable to God, nothing more healthful to the soul in this present state, than to suffer willingly for the sake of *Christ*. And if it were put to thy own choice, thou oughtest to prefer suffering adversities for the sake of *Christ*, before the being refreshed with sundry consolations; because hereby thou wouldest become more like unto *Christ*, and more conformable to all the Saints. For our acceptableness, and the perfection of our spiritual estate consisteth not in a multitude of delightful perceptions, and consolations; but rather in a patient enduring of great heavinesses, and sore tribulations.

XV. If

XV. If so be any thing had been better, and more conducing to the salvation of men, than suffering, doubtless *Christ* would have shewn it both by word and example. For both the Disciples that followed him, and all others that did, or should hereafter desire to follow him, he manifestly exhorteth to the bearing of the Cross, and saith: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me*¹. Wherefore after having read, and ransack'd all things, be this the sum and final conclusion of the matter, that, *through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of GOD*.

¹ Matth. xvi. 24.

² Acts xiv. 22.

The End of the Second Book.

OF THE
IMITATION
OF
CHRIST.

BOOK III.
Of Internal Consolation.

CHAP. I.

*Of the inward Speaking of Christ to the
faithful Soul.*



*Will hearken to what the Lord
God will say within me.
Blessed is the Soul, that heareth
the Lord speaking in her, and
from his own mouth receiveth the word of*

consolation. Blessed are the ears, which entertain the sweet sound of the divine whisper, and are deaf to the babblings of this world. Yea, manifestly blessed are the ears, which hearken not to the voice that soundeth from without, but to the Truth that teacheth from within. Blessed are the eyes, that are shut to exterior objects, but intent and fixed upon interior. Blessed are those, who penetrate into internal things, and by holy exercises make it their business daily to prepare themselves more and more for the understanding of heavenly secrets. Blessed are those persons, whose whole delight is the service of GOD, and who for that end disengage themselves from all worldly incumbrance.

II. Consider these things, O my Soul, and shut the doors of thy senses: That thou mayst be able to hear what the Lord thy GOD speaketh within thee. Thus saith thy beloved.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. I am thy salvation, thy peace, and thy life. Keep thy self close to me, and thou shalt find peace. Dismiss all transitory things, seek those that are eternal. What are all temporal things, but delusions? And what signify all

the creatures, if thou art forsaken of the Creator? Wherefore renouncing all things, render thy self well-pleasing, and faithful to thy Creator; to the end thou mayst be able to lay hold of true happiness.

CHAP. II.

*That Truth speaketh inwardly, without
noise of Words.*

I **S**peak, Lord, for thy servant heareth^a. I am thy servant, give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies^b. Incline my heart to the words of thy mouth: Let thy speech distil as the dew^c. The children of Israel in times past said unto Moses, Speak thou unto us, and we will hear: Let not God speak unto us, lest we die^d. I pray not in this wise; no, Lord, I pray not so: But rather with the Prophet Samuel I humbly and affectionately entreat: *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth*. Let not Moses speak unto me, or any of the Prophets: But speak

^a 1 Sam. iii. 10.^b Psal. cxix. 125.^c Deut. xxxii. 4.^d Exod. xx. 19.

thou rather, Lord God, the inspirer and enlightener of all the Prophets: Because thou alone without them art able perfectly to instruct me; but they without thee will profit me nothing.

II. They can indeed repeat the sound of thy words, but they give them not their life and their spirit. They speak admirably, but if thou art silent, they warm not the heart. They administer the letter, but thou openest the sense. They utter the mysteries, but thou givest understanding to unlock their meaning. They publish thy commandments, but thou assistest to fulfil them. They shew the way, but thou givest the strength to walk in it. They act only from without, but thou instructest, and enlightenest the heart. They water outwardly, but thou givest the encrease. They pierce the ear with the voice of their cry, but thou givest understanding to the hearing.

III. Let not therefore *Moses* speak unto me, but thou, my Lord God, thou Truth eternal; lest I die, and prove fruitless, if I be admonished only from without, and not inwardly inflamed: Lest the Word heard, but not done; known, but not loved; believed, but not kept, turn to my condemnation.

nation. *Speak, therefore, for thy servant heareth: For thou hast the words of eternal life^a. Speak unto me, to the comfort (in some sort) of my soul, and to the reformation of my whole life; and to thy own praise, and glory, and everlasting renown.*

CHAP. III.

That the Words of GOD ought to be heard with Humility; and that many ponder them not.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, hear my words, words full of sweetness, and surpassing all the knowledge and doctrine of the Philosophers, and wise men of this world. *My words are spirit and life^b*, and not to be weigh'd in the balance of a human understanding, nor to be taken in a gross and natural sense: They are not to be wrested to the pleasing of a vain curiosity; but to be heard in silence, and to be received with all humility, and with an ardent affection. And I said:

^a John vi. 68.

^b John vi. 63.

THE SOUL.

Blessed is the man whom thou instructest, O Lord, and teachest him in thy law; that thou mayst give him strength in time of adversity^c, lest he be left desolate upon the earth.

JESUS-CHRIST.

II. I, saith the Lord, taught the Prophets from the beginning, and even to this day cease not to speak unto all: But many are deaf, and insensible to my voice. Most men hearken more greedily to the world than to GOD: They more readily follow their own sensual and carnal desires, than the good pleasure of GOD. The world promises temporal and trifling advantages; and with great eagerness they engage in its service? I promise immense and eternal joys; and the hearts of men remain stupid and unmoved. Where's the man that serves and obeys me in all things, with that care and exactness with which the world, and those that command it, are served and obey'd? *Be thou ashamed, O Sidon, saith the Sea^d. And if thou askest the*

^c Psal. xciv. 12.

^d Isai. xxiv. 4.

nation. *Speak*, therefore, *for thy servant heareth*: For *thou hast the words of eternal life*^a. Speak unto me, to the comfort (in some sort) of my soul, and to the reformation of my whole life; and to thy own praise, and glory, and everlasting renown.

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^c Psal. xciv. 12.^d Isai. xxiv. 4.

reason, hear why. For a small Prebend a long and painful journey is undertaken: But for eternal life, many will scarce once lift a foot from the ground. A little sordid gain engages all men's industry: A trifling sum embroils them sometimes in tedious and expensive suits: For a vain expectation, and an inconsiderable promise, they are content to fatigue themselves day and night.

III. But alas! for an unchangeable good, for an inestimable reward, for the brightest crown, and an everlasting glory, they think much to take but a little pains. Be ashamed therefore, O slothful and querulous servant, that they should be found readier to destruction, than thou to life. They rejoice more in vanity, than thou in the truth. Nay, they are sometimes disappointed of their hopes; but my promise deceiveth no man, nor doth it send him away empty that trusteth in me. What I have promised, I will give; what I have said, I will fulfil; provided only a man continue faithful in my love, even unto the end. I am the rewarder of all the good, and the prover of all the devout, by causing them to pass through sharp trials.

IV. Write my words in thy heart, and
ponder

ponder them diligently: For they will be found exceeding necessary in the hour of trial and adversity. What thou understandest not when thou readest, thou wilt comprehend in the day of visitation. I am wont to visit my Elect two several ways; namely, by temptation and consolation. And I read unto them daily two Lessons, one reprehending and chastising their vices, the other exciting and exhorting them to an advancement in all virtue. *He that hath my words, and rejecteth them, hath one that judgeth him in the last day^d.*

A Prayer to implore the Grace of Devotion.

V. **M**Y Lord and my GOD, thou art my whole and only good. And who am I, that I should presume to speak unto thee? I am the poorest of all thy vassals, even a most vile and abject worm; infinitely more poor and contemptible than I am able to conceive, or dare to express. Yet remember, O Lord, that I am nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing. Thou alone

^d John xii. 47, 48.

art good, just, and holy; thou canst do all things, thou dost all things, thou fillest all things, except the sinner only, whom thou sendest away empty. Remember thy compassions, and fill my heart with thy grace, who wouldest not that thy works should remain void and empty.

VI. How can I possibly support my self in this miserable life; except thy mercy and grace strengthen me? Turn not thy face from me: Prolong not thy fatherly visitation: Withdraw not thy consolations; lest my soul become *like a barren and dry land where no water is*^c. Teach me to do thy will: Teach me to walk worthily and humbly in thy sight: Because thou art my wisdom, who knowest me perfectly, and didst know me before the world was made, and before I was born into the world.

^c Psal. lxiii. 2.

CHAP. IV.

*That we ought to walk before GOD in
Truth and Humility.*

JESUS-CHRIST.

SON, walk before me in truth; and in the simplicity of thy heart seek me always. He that walketh before me in truth, shall be defended from the assaults of the Devil, and the truth shall deliver him from the seducements and detractions of the wicked. *If the truth shall have made thee free, thou shalt be free indeed*; and shalt not heed the vain speeches of men.

THE SOUL.

It is true, Lord: And as thou sayst, so I beseech thee be it unto thy servant. Let thy truth teach me; let it watch over me, and bring me safe at last to a happy end. Let it deliver me from all evil affection, and inordinate love: And I shall walk with thee in great liberty of heart.

▪ John viii. 36.

JESUS-CHRIST.

II. I will teach thee (saith Truth) the things that are right and well-pleasing before me. Reflect upon thy sins with great remorse, and sorrow: And never account thy self to be any thing because of good works. In very truth thou art a sinner, and subject to, and tied and bound with, the chains of fundry passions. Of thy self thou art ever tending to vanity and nothing; thou easily fallest, art soon overcome, quickly discomposed, and in a moment diverted from thy good resolutions. Thou hast not any one thing, whereof thou canst boast; but many, that ought to render thee vile in thy own eyes: Since thou art much weaker than thou art able to conceive.

III. Let nothing therefore seem unto thee considerable of all the things thou dost. Let nothing appear to thee great, nothing valuable, nothing worthy of praise, or admiration: Nothing high, nothing truly commendable, and desirable, but what is eternal. Let Truth eternal be thy supreme delight; and thy own exceeding vileness the constant object of thy hatred and contempt. Fear, vilify, fly nothing so much, as thy
own

own vices, and sins; which ought to displease thee more than any worldly loss or calamity whatsoever. Some men walk not sincerely before me, but being acted by a spirit of arrogance and curiosity, affect to know my secrets, and to understand the deep things of God; neglecting, in the mean time, themselves, and their own salvation. These men frequently fall into dangerous snares, and great sins, upon the account of their pride and curiosity, whilst I resist and set my face against them.

IV. Fear the judgments of God; dread the wrath of the Almighty. But do not discuss the works of the Most Highest, but examine strictly thy own iniquities; how much evil thou hast done, and how much good thou hast left undone. Some carry their religion only in books, some in images, some in an outward shew and pomp of devotion. Some have me in their mouth, but have little of me in their heart. Others there are, who being illuminated in their understanding, and purged in their affection, are ever gasping and panting after eternal things: It is grievous to them to hear of earthly things, painful to attend the necessities of nature: And these are the men that hear and perceive what the Spirit of Truth

Truth speaketh in them. For he teacheth them to despise earthly, and to love heavenly things: To neglect the world, and to long, yea to languish, day and night, for the joys of Heaven.

CHAP. V.

*Of the marvellous Effects of the Love of
GOD.*

THE FAITHFUL SOUL.

I Bless and praise thee, O Father of Heaven, the Father of my Lord *Jesus Christ*, for that thou hast vouchsafed to remember thy poor miserable creature. O Father of mercies, and GOD of all consolation, thanks be unto thee, for refreshing the soul of thy servant (unworthy as he is of all consolation) with the consolation sometimes of thy Spirit. For this I bless and glorify thee, and will bless and glorify thee, together with thy only-begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter, to all eternity. Ah! Lord GOD, the holy lover and spouse of my soul, when it shall please thee to descend into my heart, all that is within
me

me shall leap for joy. Thou art my glory, and the very rejoycing of my heart. Thou art my hope, and my refuge in the day of my tribulation.

II. But because my Love is as yet feeble, and my virtue imperfect; therefore I have need to be strengthened and comforted by thee: O visit me then often, I beseech thee, and instruct me with thy holy precepts. Deliver me from evil passions, and cure my heart of all inordinate affections; to the end that being inwardly healed, and thoroughly cleansed, I may be rendred fit to love, strong to suffer, and stable to persevere.

III. Love is indeed a mighty thing, a most sovereign good: This alone lightens every burden, and smooths every rough way. For it carries a load without feeling the weight, and renders every bitter sweet and savoury. The Love of *Jesus* is noble and generous, it pushes a man on to great undertakings, and excites him to be ever aspiring after still higher degrees of perfection. Love is ever mounting upwards, and cannot bear to be retarded in its flight by any low and earthly thing. Love would fain be free and disengaged from all worldly affections; that so its inward eye may not

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be clouded, and that it may not be subject to the embarrasments of any temporal good, nor yield to the impressions of any temporal evil. Nothing is sweeter than Love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing broader, nothing pleasanter, nothing fuller, nothing more excellent in Heaven, and in earth: Because Love is born of God, and can rest in nothing but God, above and beyond all finite and created things.

IV. The Lover flies, runs, and is full of chearfulness and joy; he is free, and nothing stops him in his course. He gives all for all, and possesses all in all: Because he rests in the one Sovereign and Supreme above all, from whom all good flows and proceeds. He looks not to the gift, but turns wholly to the Author above all goods and gifts whatsoever. Love many times knows no limits, no measure, but transcends all bounds in its fervency. Love feels no weight, considers no pains; attempts more than it is able to effect: Never excuses it self upon the pretence of impossibility; as being persuaded that all things are both lawful and possible unto it. Thus is Love able to do all things, and actually performs and atchieves many things, where the fire continues strong, and the Lover is not slack and heartless.

V. Love

V. Love never sleeps; it is awake even in its slumbers. It is fatigued, but not tired; hamper'd, but not enslav'd; alarm'd with fears, but not confounded; and like a strong and active flame, it is ever bursting upwards, and securely passes through all opposition. Whosoever loves, he full well understands the piercing force of this cry. A powerful cry in the ears of the Almighty is that bare expression alone of the fervent enamoured soul: *My God, my Love: Thou art wholly mine, and I am wholly thine.*

VI. O dilate and enlarge my heart, to the end it may be more capable of Love. Cause me to feel experimentally, even to taste with the inner palate of my soul how sweet a thing it is to love, and to be wholly lost and swallowed up in a sea of Love. Let me be possessed with Love to the degree of being utterly ravished out of my self by an excess of fervour and ecstasique transport. Let me sing a song of Love: Let me follow thee my Beloved up into Heaven: Let my soul, exulting and triumphing for Love, faint and die away in thy praise. Let me love thee more than my self; and my self only for thy sake; and in and for thee all others, that sincerely love thee, according to the commandment of that perfect law of

Love, which is but a beam of thy own infinite charity, who art Love.

VII. Love is nimble in its motions, sincere in its intentions, tender and compassionate, delightful to it self, pleasing and agreeable to others; courageous, patient, faithful even to death, prudent, long-suffering, generous and manly, and never seeketh it self. For when once a man seeketh himself, from that instant he falls off from Love. Love is circumspect, humble, just and upright: Not soft and effeminate, not light and fickle, nor minding the vanities of this transitory world; but sober, chaste, constant and persevering, peaceable and calm, and well-guarded in all its senses. Love is subject, and obedient to Superiors; vile and despicable in its own eyes; full of devotion and gratitude to God; trusting, and ever hoping in him; even under spiritual discomfort, and when the things of God are not relishing to its palate: Because there is no living without pain in Love.

VIII. He that is not ready to endure all things, and to stand wholly to the will of the Beloved, is not worthy the name of a Lover. A Lover ought to embrace joyfully all hardships and afflictions for the sake of his

his Beloved; and never to turn aside from him upon the account of disasters and cross accidents.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Tryal of true Love.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. SON, thou art not yet become a valiant and prudent Lover.

THE SOUL.

Why, Lord?

JESUS-CHRIST.

Because a slight opposition shocks thy good purpose; and because thou seekest consolation and comfort too eagerly. A valiant Lover stands firm amidst tryals and temptations, and hearkens not to the crafty insinuations of the Enemy. As I please him in prosperity, so neither do I displease him in adversity.

II. He that loves prudently, doth not consider so much the Gift of the Lover, as the Love of the Giver. He esteems the affecti-

on, more than the present; and prefers the Beloved Object before all the advantage that may be expected from him. The noble and generous Lover placeth not his joy and felicity in the favours he receives, but in me above all gifts and favours whatsoever. Not that thou shouldest therefore give all for gone, because now and then thou hast doubts and misgivings, and thinkest not so well of me, nor with that affection, as thou couldst wish. Those kindly and transporting sentiments of Love and Devotion, which thou sometimes perceivest to overspread thy soul, are the effect of present grace, and a certain foretaste of the joys of thy heavenly country; upon which thou art not overmuch to depend, because they come and go. But to struggle against the incidental and occasional evil motions of thy mind, and to despise the suggestions of the Devil, is a remarkable proof of true Christian bravery, and shall be greatly rewarded.

III. Let not therefore vain fancies, and strange imaginations, that are forced upon thee (be the matter of them what it will) give thee any disturbance. Maintain only a firm unshaken resolution of obedience, and a pure and upright intention towards God. Nor art thou to look upon it as an illusion, because

because thou art rapt sometimes all of a sudden into an ecstasie, and returnest again presently to thy ordinary distractions, and usual lightnesses of spirit. For thou sufferest them rather against thy will, than contributest to them; and so long as they are displeasing to thee, and thou strivest against them, it is matter of ^a virtue, not of sin.

IV. Be thou assured of this, that the old Enemy is ever labouring to extinguish in thee all holy desires, and to divert thee from every devout exercise: As, from ^b honouring and imitating the Saints, from the pious memory of my Passion, from the profitable recollection of thy sins, from watchfulness over thy own heart, and from a firm purpose of advancing in virtue. He conveys a thousand evil thoughts into thy heart, to the end he may create in thee irksomeness and horror, and withdraw thee from Prayer, and holy Reading. He likes not an humble and meek confession of sin, and (if he could) he would bring thee to a total disuse of the holy Sacrament. Believe him not, nor mind him, notwithstanding all his artifices and

^a In the Original; *Matter of Merit.* ^b In the Original; *From the Worship of the Saints.*

snares to intrap thee. Impute them to him,
 when he injects evil and foul thoughts in-
 to thee. Say unto him: "*Get thee behind*
 "*me, thou unclean Spirit: Blush, vile mis-*
 "*creant: Thou art very impure, to suggest*
 "*such things to me. Depart from me,*
 "*most detestable seducer; thou shalt have*
 "*neither part nor portion in me: But my*
 "*Jesus shall be with me, as a stout warri-*
 "*or, and thou shalt stand confounded. I had*
 "*rather die, and endure all torments, than*
 "*consent to thy motions. Hold thy peace,*
 "*and be for ever dumb; for I will never*
 "*hearken more to thy wicked solicitations.*
 "*The Lord is my light, and my salvation;*
 "*whom then shall I fear? Though an host*
 "*were banded together against me, yet*
 "*shall not my heart be afraid. The Lord*
 "*is my helper, and my redeemer.*"

V. Strive like a good soldier; and if at
 any time thou fall through frailty, rally
 thy forces again, and redouble thy vigour,
 not doubting of larger recruits of grace from
 me; and above all things beware of vain
 complacence, and pride: Upon the account
 of this one thing, many have been led a-
 way into error, and have fallen sometimes
 into an almost incurable blindness. Let this
 ruin of the proud foolishly presuming upon
 themselves,

themselves, be a warning to thee, and serve to keep thee perpetually humble.

CHAP. VII.

Of hiding the Grace of Devotion under the Veil of Humility.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. SON, it is better and safer for thee to conceal the Grace of Devotion, and not to be elevated and exalted upon it, nor to talk much of it, nor to count it so mighty a matter; but rather to despise thy self, and to be apprehensive of it as of a thing given to an unworthy person. There can be no great depending upon an affection of heart, which may take a quite contrary turn, the very next moment. Reflect during the enjoyment of Grace, how poor and miserable thou art wont to be without Grace. Neither doth the improvement of the spiritual life consist meerly in having the Grace of consolation: But in an humble, resign'd, and patient bearing the withdrawing thereof; so as to abate nothing (at such a time) of thy diligence in Prayer, nor to let slip any other of thy accustomed exercises; But to
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the best of thy power and understanding, willingly to perform what in thee lies: And not through the present barrenness, and disquietude of thy spirit, totally to neglect thy self.

II. For many there are, who when things succeed not to their wish, presently become impatient, or slothful. ^a For *the way of man is not* always in himself; but it belongeth unto God both to give unto, and to comfort, when he pleaseth, in what manner and degree he pleaseth, and whom he pleaseth; even according to his own good liking, and no farther. Some inconsiderate persons, for want of a right use of the Grace of Devotion, have ruin'd themselves; because they have attempted to do more, than they had strength to perform; not considering the measure of their own littleness, but following rather the affection and zeal of their heart, than the judgment and conduct of their reason. And because they have presumed greater things, than hath been pleasing to God, for this reason they have presently lost Grace. The same persons that had built their nest in Heaven, have been cast down all of a sudden, and abandon'd

^a Jerem. x. 23.

to beggary and vileness; to the end that being humbled, and stript of all, they may learn not to trust to their own wings, but to place their hope in the protection of mine. Those that are yet Noyices, and unexperient'd in the way of the Lord, unless they govern themselves by the advice of the discreet, may easily be deceiv'd, and dash against a rock.

III. And if they chuse to follow their own sense, rather than to hearken to men of experience, and long observation, there will be danger of a fatal miscarriage; at least if they are so obstinate as not to be brought off from the opinions they have once conceiv'd. They who are wise in their own eyes, have seldom humility enough to endure to be directed by others. A moderate degree of knowledge, and a small capacity, accompany'd with humility, is preferable to vast treasures of learning, attended with vanity and self conceit. It is better for thee to have but little, than a great deal from whence thou mayst take occasion to be proud. It is indiscretion in a man to abandon himself entirely to joy, forgetful of his former poverty, and of that chaste and reverential fear of the Lord, which is ever apprehensive of losing the Grace it hath

hath receiv'd. It is also an infirmity, and a defect of virtue, for a man, in the day of adversity, or of any tribulation whatsoever, to give too much way to melancholy and despair, and to think and believe less confidently of me, than he ought.

IV. He that in time of peace is too secure, is generally in time of war found to be too dejected, and faint-hearted. If thou couldst be but always humble and lowly in thine own eyes; if thou wert able duly to moderate and regulate the motions of thy spirit aright; thou wouldst not fall so often into danger, and sin. It is good advice to meditate, during the spirit of fervour, how it will be with thee, when those beams of comfort shut in. Which when it happens, support thy self with the hopes of the return of day-light; which for thy caution, and my own glory, I have withdrawn for a season.

V. Such a Probation and Tryal as this is more for thy advantage, than if thou hadst a constant succession of all the prosperity thy heart could wish. For a man's merit or worthiness is not to be estimated and rated by the number of visions and consolations which he may have; nor by his skill in the Scriptures; nor by his being raised above others

thers in power and dignity : But by his being grounded and established in true humility, and fulfilled with divine charity : By his seeking the honour of GOD purely, and entirely, and in all things whatsoever : By a perfect renouncing of all self-esteem ; yea, by an unfeigned despising of himself, and by rejoicing more to be despis'd and abased by others also, than to be esteemed and honoured by them.

CHAP. VIII.

Of acknowledging our own great Vileness and Unworthiness before GOD.

THE SOUL.

I. **S**HALL I take upon me to speak unto my Lord, who am but dust and ashes ? For should I conceive any thing better of my self, behold thou thy self standest up against me ; and mine own iniquities bear me down by a true and undeniable testimony, nor is it possible for me to reply, or gainsay. But if I think my self

the vilest of creatures, if I beat down and humble my soul even to nothing, if I empty my self utterly of all self-esteem, and reduce my self to (what I really am) vile dust and ashes; then shalt thou look upon me with a gracious and favourable eye; then shall thy light draw near unto my heart: and all relicks of self-value, even the least that can possibly be imagin'd, shall be plung'd and ingulf'd in the abyss of my nothingness, and perish for evermore. In that abyss thou shewest me unto my self; there I learn what I am, what I was, and what I am now become: For *I am nothing, and knew it not*. If I am left to my self, behold I am meer nothing, and all infirmity. Yet no sooner dost thou cast an eye upon me, but my weakness is made strong, and I am filled with a surprizing joy and vigour. And a marvellous thing it is, that I should be thus suddenly lifted up, and so tenderly embraced by thee; I, who of my self naturally sink, and by my own weight am ever tending downwards to earth and sin.

II. This I am sensible is the effect of thy free unmerited Love, preventing my desires, succouring me in all my necessities, guarding me from great dangers, and rescuing

rescuing me (as I may truly say) from innumerable evils. For by an inordinate Love of my self, I had lost my self: and by seeking thee alone, and loving thee with an entire and pure affection, I at once found again both my self and thee; and this Love, the deeper it hath penetrated, the deeper still hath it sunk me in the bottomless vale of my own true and real nothing: Because thou, O sweetest Saviour, art bountiful unto me infinitely beyond all my deserts, yea, beyond all that I dare either hope, or ask.

III. Blessed be thou, my GOD; because unworthy tho' I am of the least of thy mercies, yet thy excellent Majesty and infinite Goodness ceaseth not to load with thy benefits even the ungrateful, and those that are turned away far from thee. O! turn us again unto thee, to the end we may become thankful, humble, and devout; because thou art our salvation, our power, and our strength.

CHAP. IX.

*That all Things ought to be referr'd unto
GOD, as to their ultimate End.*

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, I must be the supreme and ultimate End of all thy actions and desires, if thou hast a mind to be truly happy. This intention will refine and purify thy affections, which otherwise, by an evil byass are many times bow'd and warp'd to thy self, and to the creatures. For if thou seek thy self, immediately in, and of thy self, thou failest, and becomest feeble, dry, and heartless. Refer therefore all things unto me principally, because I am he that have given all things. Regard every thing, as derived and flowing from the first and fovereign Good: and therefore all things ought to be return'd back, and referr'd to me, as to their source and original spring.

II. Out of me, the little and the great, the poor and the rich, draw, as from a living fountain, the water of life: and they who serve me voluntarily and freely, shall receive grace after grace. But he that glories

ries in any thing out of, and besides me, or places his satisfaction in any private and particular good, shall never be established in true joy, nor have any ease and enlargement of heart, but shall always be in perplexity and distress of soul, and be embarrassed and encumber'd a thousand ways. Thou oughtest therefore to appropriate nothing of good to thy self, nor to attribute any thing of virtue to any other person; but ascribe thou the whole to GOD, without whom Man hath nothing. I gave all, I will have all again; and do with great strictness require the tribute of acknowledgment and thanksgiving.

III. Lo, this is that truth, that puts to flight all pride and vain-glory. And if my grace, together with true charity, once enter the heart, there will be no more envy, nor narrowness of spirit, nor will self-love, or private respects, find room there any longer. For divine charity surmounts all things, and dilates and enlarges all the powers of the soul. If thou art truly wise, in me alone wilt thou rejoice, in me alone wilt thou hope: because *there is none good but GOD only*^a, who is to be bless'd and prais'd above all, and in all.

^a Matth. xix. 17.

CHAP. X.

*The Delightfulness of despising the World,
and serving GOD.*

I. **I** Will again presume to speak, O Lord, and will not be silent; I will say in the ears of my GOD, of my Lord, and of my King, who sitteth in the highest Heavens; *O how plentiful is thy goodness, O Lord, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!* But what art thou to them that love thee? What to them that serve thee with their whole heart? Beyond all doubt, the pleasure of contemplating thee, which thou indulgest to those that love thee, is impossible to be express'd. In this principally didst thou manifest the tenderness of thy loving-kindness to me, in that when I was not, thou madest me: and when I erred and strayed far from thee, thou broughtest me back again, to the end I might serve thee: And hast commanded me to love thee.

II. O thou overflowing spring of everlasting Love, what shall I say of thee? How

* Psal. xxxi. 21.

can I ever forget thee, who didst condescend to remember me, even after I was dead, and lost, and become like a branch dry'd up and wither'd? Thou hast shewn mercy unto thy servant, beyond all that he could hope; and beyond all desert, hast prevented him with the offers of thy grace and tenderest Love. ^b What shall I render back unto thee for all thy benefits? If I resolve to dedicate my self to thy service, what a poor return is that to thee, whom all created Nature is bound to serve? I ought not to imagine that I do any great thing in serving thee; but this rather appears to me great and wonderful, that thou shouldst vouchsafe to admit to thy service so poor and worthless a creature, and to make him one of the number of thy well-beloved servants.

III. Behold, all that I have, and every thing wherewith I do, or can serve thee, is thine. Yea rather contrariwise, thou servest me more than I serve thee. Behold the Heaven and the earth, which thou hast created for the service of Man, are always

^b In the Original Latin: *What shall I render back unto thee for this grace? For it is not given to all, to renounce the world, with all the things thereof, and to enter upon a Monastick life.*

ready, and daily execute whatsoever thou hast commanded them : but this is not enough ; for farther yet, thou hast ordained even the Angels for the service of Men. But what transcends all is, that thou thy self hast vouchsafed to serve Man, and hast promised to give thy self unto him.

IV. What shall I return unto thee, for these innumerable benefits ? I wish I could serve thee all the days of my life ! I wish I were sufficient to do thee worthy service, even for but one day ! Verily thou art worthy of all service, all honour, and praise eternal. Verily thou art my Lord, and I thy poor servant ; who am bound with all my strength to serve thee, nor ought I ever to be weary in chanting thy praises. This is my persuasion, this the desire of my soul : and whatever is wanting in me, do thou vouchsafe to supply and make up.

V. A great honour, a great glory is it, to serve thee, and to despise all things for thy sake. For they shall enjoy large measures of grace, who have freely submitted to thy most holy service. They shall find the most ravishing consolations of the Holy Spirit, who for love of thee, have renounced all carnal delights. They shall obtain great liberty and enlargement of soul, who,

for thy name's sake, walk in the strait and narrow way, and have bid adieu to all worldly cares and incumbrances.

VI. O agreeable and delightful service of GOD, whereby Man is render'd truly free, truly holy! O blessed dependence, which enters us of the Family of the Most High, raises us up to a level with the Angels, reconciles us to the Almighty, makes us a terror to evil Spirits, and recommends us to the love of all the Faithful! O to be embrac'd, and ever to be wish'd service, that gains us the sovereign Good, and procures us a joy which never shall have end!

CHAP. XI.

*That we ought to examine and regulate
the Desires of our Heart.*

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, thou art still to learn many things, which thou hast not yet been thoroughly taught.

THE SOUL.

What are those, Lord?

JESUS-CHRIST.

To conform thy self in all thy desires to my good pleasure: and not to be a lover of thy self, but a zealous imitator and religious observer of me and of my will. Desires often inflame thee, and push thee on violently; but consider, whether my glory, or thy own interest, be thy chief motive. If I am the principal Mover, thou wilt be well contented, howsoever I dispose the event; but if there be any lurking principle of self-seeking, or private and by-respects, behold, this is that very thing which encumbers and disquiets thee.

II. Beware therefore of laying too much stress upon any desire form'd and conceiv'd in thy own breast, without first consulting me; lest perchance it repent thee afterwards, or thou disapprove of that, which at first thou didst approve, and soughtest with as great eagerness and zeal, as tho' it had been the best thing in the world. For not every inclination that seemeth good, is presently to be pursued; no, nor every inclination neither, that seemeth evil, rashly and at first sight to be rejected. It is expedient sometimes to use the rein, and to check thy self, even in good desires, and
pious

pious inclinations, for fear of incurring distraction and confusion in thy devotions, through an impetuous excess of zeal; for fear also of giving offence to others by thy extravagant heats, and indiscreet fervours: for fear lastly, of being ruffled and discomposed, by an unexpected opposition, the surprize whereof may shake thy constancy, and cause thee to fall.

III. Sometimes again it is convenient to use violence, and manfully to combat the sensitive Appetite: To bear no manner of regard to the flesh, or to what may be agreeable, or disagreeable to it: but to make it our business rather, to bring it into subjection to the spirit whether it will or no. And so long ought it to be buffeted, and constrained to pay a servile obedience, even until it acquire a readiness of submitting tamely to whatever shall be imposed upon it; till it learn to be contented with few things, and to be delighted with ordinary things, and not to murmur in the least against any inconvenience or hardship whatsoever.

CHAP. XII.

An Instruction as to Patience; and of the Necessity of combating our Passions and Appetites.

THE SOUL.

I. **M**Y Lord, and my GOD, Patience, I perceive, is exceeding necessary for me, upon account of the numerous calamities and cross accidents of life. For in what manner soever I order my peace, my life can be no other than a state of warfare and trouble.

JESUS-CHRIST.

So it is, my Son. But I would have thee aspire after, not such a peace as is exempt from temptations, or undisturbed with afflictions: But to make account that thou hast even then found peace, when thou hast been exercised with various tribulations, and proved by sundry crosses and sufferings.

II. If thou say, thou art not able to suffer much, how then wilt thou be able to endure the fire of Hell? Of two evils the

* In the Original: *The Fire of Purgatory.*

less is always to be chosen. Therefore that thou mayst escape the eternal torments of the world to come, set thy self to bear with submission and patience, for the sake of God, the evils of this present world. Dost thou imagine, that the men of this world have little or no trouble? Thou wilt not find it so, tho' thou look among the delicatest, and most luxurious of them all. But they have, thou wilt say, delights and enjoyments in abundance, and follow their own inclinations without controul; and therefore their tribulations make but a slight impression upon their spirits. Be it so, grant that they have whatsoever they desire; yet, how long, thinkest thou, will it last?

III. Behold, the rich of this world shall vanish like smoak, and there shall be no remembrance of their past joys. Yea, during their very life, they rest not in them, without bitterness, and satiety, and fear. For the very thing, from whence they draw their pleasure, is frequently the spring and occasion of as much pain and sorrow to them. And this by a just Judgment; it being but reasonable that they should find confusion and bitterness in the enjoyment of those pleasures, which they seek and pursue inordinately.

IV. O how short, how deceitful, how inordinate and shameful are all of them! Yet notwithstanding men are so blinded, and intoxicated, that they are not sensible of it: But like brute beasts, for a little transitory pleasure of a corruptible life, they incur the death of the soul. Wherefore, my Son, go not thou after thy lusts, and turn aside from thy own will. ^d *Delight thou in the Lord, and he shall grant thee thy heart's desire.*

V. For if thou wouldst be truly delighted and richly comforted by me; lo! In the contempt of all worldly things, and in the renouncing of all inferior delights, shall thy blessedness consist; and so shalt thou be rewarded with a plenteous consolation. And by how much the more thou shalt sequester thy self from all creaturely comforts, so much the sweeter, and more powerful consolations shalt thou find in me. But at first, thou shalt not arrive at these, without a certain regret, and laborious conflict. Inveterate habit will make resistance; but it will be effectually conquered by a better habit. The flesh will repine and murmur; but it will be restrained and silenced by the fervour of the spirit. The old Serpent will

^d Psal. xxxvii. 4.

instigate and provoke thee to a revolt; but he will be put to flight by prayer: Moreover also, useful labour will be a great bar to his approaches.

CHAP. XIII.

Of Obedience to Governours, after the Example of Jesus-Christ.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, the man that endeavours to withdraw himself from obedience, withdraws himself, at the same time, from grace. And he that seeks his own private and particular good, loses those that are common and general. He that does not willingly and voluntarily submit to his Governours, plainly demonstrates that he has not his flesh yet in perfect subjection; but that it often mutinies and murmurs against him. Learn therefore readily to submit to those that God hath set over thee, if thou hast a desire perfectly to subdue thy own flesh, and to bring it into subjection to the spirit. For this outward enemy (the flesh) is soon overcome, if the inner man (the soul)

soul) maintain its just sovereignty : And there is not a more desperate, nor a more dangerous enemy to the soul, than thou thy self art, whilst thou consentest not to the law of the spirit. Wherefore it is absolutely necessary for thee to be established in a true and real contempt of thy self, if thou wouldst prevail against flesh and blood.

II. Because thou still lovest thy self inordinately, for this reason thou art loth to resign up thy self fully to the will of others. But is it a thing so extraordinary, if thou, who art dust, and nothing, submit to Man for God's sake ; when I, the Almighty, and Most Highest, who created all things out of nothing, humbly submitted to Man for thy sake ? I became the humblest, and most abject of all men, to the end thou mightest subdue thy own pride by the example of my humility. Learn to obey, thou dust. Learn to abase thy self, thou earth and clay, and to lay thy self under the feet of all men. Learn to bow and break the perverse inclinations of thy own will, and to yield thy self up to an entire obedience in all things lawfully required of thee.

III. Rise up in indignation against thy self, and suffer not the least swelling of pride to live in thee : But render thy self so submissive,

missive, so perfectly humble, that all may walk over thee, and trample thee as the very dirt of the streets. What hast thou to complain of, vain man? What hast thou to answer, filthy sinner, to those that reproach and treat thee ill; thou that hast so often offended God, and many, many a time deserv'd to be cast quick into Hell? But my eye hath spared thee, because thy soul was precious in my sight; to the end thou mightest be sensible of the love I bear thee, and always thankful for my benefits: And that thou mightest continually devote thy self to an unfeigned humility and sincere submission, and endure patiently to be contemn'd and despised by all men.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Consideration of the secret Judgments of GOD, to keep us from being lifted up upon the account of our good Actions.

THE SOUL.

I. **T**HOU breakest the thunder of thy Judgments over me, O Lord, and shakest

shakest all my bones with fear and trembling, and my soul is seiz'd with a horrible dread. I stand confounded and astonished, and reflect, that *the Heavens are not pure in thy sight*. If *thou hast charged thy Angels with folly*, and not spared even them, what must become of me? *The stars fell from the firmament*; and how dare I, that am but dust, presume? Many whose actions seemed fair and commendable, have fallen to the nethermost Deep: and I have seen those, who did eat the bread of Angels, gladly to feed upon husks with swine.

II. There is therefore no holiness, if thou, Lord, withdraw thy hand. No wisdom availeth, without thy direction and governance. No strength is sufficient, if thou cease to preserve us; no chastity secure, except thou protect it; no watchfulness of our own effectual, unless thy holy vigilance be the Sentinel. For when left, we sink, and perish; but when visited, we are raised up, and live. For we are weak and unstable, but by thee we are confirm'd and established: We are cold and lukewarm, but by thee we are inspired with zeal and fervour.

III. O how meanly and abjectly ought I to conceive of my self! How worthless, how perfectly nothing ought I to esteem it,

if I should seem to have any good thing in me! O how profoundly ought I to humble and abase my self, under the amazing view of the abyss of thy Judgments, O Lord! in which I find my self to be nothing else, but *nothing*, yea, purely *nothing*: O weight immense! O boundless unfathomable Ocean! wherein I find *nothing* of my self, but only this, that I proceeded out of *nothing*, and am entirely and throughout nothing. Where then is the place but for the shadow of glory to lurk in? What is become of all my presumption, and false confidence upon conceit of my own virtue? All vain glorying is swallowed up in the depth of thy Judgments over me.

IV. What is all flesh in thy sight? *Shall the clay exalt it self against the potter that fashioned it?* How is it possible for that man to be lifted up with vain applause, whose heart is truly subjected to God? No, the whole world shall never be able to lift him up, whom the Truth hath subjected to it self; nor shall the praises of all mouths in the least move him, who hath fix'd and establish'd his whole hope in God. For even they that speak, behold they also are all of them *nothing*; for they shall pass away
with

with the sound of their own words. But
the truth of the Lord endureth for ever ^a.

CHAP. XV.

*How we ought to stand affected, and in
 what manner we should address our
 selves to GOD in all our Desires.*

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, let this be thy language upon
 every occasion: "Lord, if it be thy
 "pleasure, grant me this request. If this
 "conduce to thy glory, be it done in thy
 "holy Name. Lord, if thou see'st that this
 "is expedient for me, and will turn to my
 "advantage, then grant it me, and with it
 "grace, to use it to thy honour. But if
 "thou knowest it will prove hurtful to me,
 "and that it is no furtherance to the good
 "of my soul, remove from me such a desire:

For every desire is not from the Holy Spi-
 rit, tho' it may seem right and good in a
 man's own eyes. It is difficult to judge
 certainly, whether thou art acted by a good

^a Psal. cxvii. v. 2.

or an evil Spirit, in desiring this or that; or whether thou art not push'd on by thy own inclination, and some private respects. Many in the end have been deceived, who at first thought themselves under the influence and conduct of a good Spirit.

2. Whatſoever therefore preſents it ſelf unto thy mind as deſirable, the ſame muſt thou deſire and aſk always in the fear of God, and with humility of heart: And thou muſt be ſure to leave the whole matter, with an entire ſubmiſſion of thy own will, to my diſpoſal, and to ſay: “ Lord thou knoweſt “ what is beſt ; Let this, or that thing be “ done, even as it ſeemeth good to thee. “ Give me what thou pleaſeſt, and as much “ as thou pleaſeſt, and when thou pleaſeſt. “ Give me ſuch things, and in ſuch mea- “ ſures, and at ſuch times, as thou thy ſelf “ pleaſeſt. Deal with me, as thou knoweſt “ is convenient, as it ſeemeth beſt to thy “ divine will, and is moſt conducive to thy “ own glory. Place me where thou wilt, “ and diſpoſe of me in all things at pleaſure. “ I am in thy hand, turn, and return me, “ from place to place, from fortune to “ fortune. Behold, I am thy ſervant, rea- “ dy prepared for all things; ſince I de- “ ſire not to live unto my ſelf, but unto thee:

“ thee: And O that I could do it worthily
 “ and perfectly!

A Prayer for Grace to do the Will of God.

III. **G**Rant me, sweetest Saviour, the grace of thy Spirit; *that it may be present with me, and labour with me*, and persevere with me even unto the end. Grant me ever to desire, and to will that, which is most acceptable, and best pleasing unto thee. Let thy will be mine, and my will always follow thine, and perfectly agree with it. Let me have the same likings, and dislikings with thee; nor let it be possible for me to like, or dislike any thing, but what thou likest and dislikest.

IV. Grant me to die unto all things, that are in the world; and for thy sake to welcome scorn and contempt. But grant me above all desires to rest in thee, and to repose my heart in thy peace. Thou art the true peace of the heart, thou the only rest; out of thee all is trouble and disquiet. In this Peace, for that very end, that is, in thee, the one Sovereign Eternal Good, I will lay me down, and take my rest. *Amen.*

CHAP. XVI.

That true Comfort is to be sought in God alone.

THE SOUL.

I. **W**Hatsoever of comfort I can possibly either desire or conceive, I expect not here, but hereafter. And had I alone all the comforts, and could I enjoy all the delights the world can afford, certain it is they could not last long. Wherefore thou canst not, O my soul, be fully comforted, nor perfectly delighted, save only in God the comforter of the poor, and sustainer of the humble. Wait a little, my soul, wait the divine promise, and thou shalt have an abundance of all good things in Heaven. If thou covet inordinately the present enjoyments of this life, thou shalt lose those that are eternal, and heavenly. Use these temporal things, but desire only those that are eternal. Thou canst not be satisfied with any temporal good, because thou wast not created for the enjoyment of such.

II. Tho' thou wert possess'd of all created goods, yet couldst thou not be happy and blessed: but in God, the Creator of all

things, thy whole blessedness and felicity consisteth: not such as is seen, and extoll'd by the foolish lovers of the world; but such as the good and faithful disciples of *Christ* expect; and the spiritual, and pure in heart, whose conversation is in Heaven, have sometimes a foretaste of. Empty and short is all human comfort. Blessed, and true is that comfort, which is inspired into the heart by Truth it self. The devout man constantly bears about with him his Comforter *Jesus*, and saith unto him: "Be with me, Lord *Jesus*, in all places, and at all times. Be this my consolation, to be contentedly destitute of all human comfort. And if thy consolation fail me, let thy will, and righteous probation be unto me instead of the highest comfort. For ^a *thou wilt not always be chiding, neither wilt thou keep thy anger for ever.*

^a Psal. ciii. 9.

CHAP. XVII.

That all our Care is to be cast upon God.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **M**Y Son, be content that I should dispose of thee and all thy concerns, as I see fit: I know what is expedient for thee. Thy thoughts are the thoughts of a man; and human affections byass thy judgment in most things.

THE SOUL.

Lord, what thou sayst is true. Greater is thy care for me, than all the care I can take for my self. For the state of that man is very precarious, very tottering, that casteth not his whole care upon thee. Lord, so long as my heart is right towards thee, and stedfastly bent to please thee, deal with me in what manner soever it seemeth best to thee. For it can be no other than good, whatsoever thou dost with me.

II. If it be thy will, that my soul should dwell in clouds and darkness, praised be thy Name: And if it be thy will, that my understanding should be illuminated, and my night

turned into day, again praised be thy Name. If thou vouchsafe to comfort me, blessed be thy Name: And if it be thy pleasure that I should be in affliction, for both equally be thy holy Name eternally blessed.

JESUS-CHRIST.

Son, this must be the posture of thy soul, if thou desire to walk with me. Thou oughtest to be as ready to suffer, as to rejoice. Thou oughtest to be as contented to be poor, and in want, as to be rich, and to abound.

THE SOUL.

III. Lord, I will chearfully suffer for thy sake, whatsoever thou art pleased should befall me. I am ready to receive from thy hand good and evil, sweet, and bitter, joy and sorrow indifferently; and for all things that happen unto me, to give thanks. Preserve me from all sin, and I shall not fear either Death, or Hell. So long as thou cast me not away for ever, nor blot my name out of the Book of Life, whatsoever load of tribulation comes upon me, it shall never hurt me.

CHAP. XVIII.

That Temporal Miseries, after the Example of Christ, ought to be born with Calmness and Evenness of Mind.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, I came down from Heaven for thy Salvation, I took upon me thy miseries, not by constraint, but out of pure love; to the end thou mightest learn patience, and bear temporal miseries without reluctancy and murmuring. For from the hour of my Birth even to my Exit upon the Cross, I had not a moment's intermission from pains and sufferings. I lived in extreme want of the necessaries of life: My ears were continually pierc'd with complaints against me: Shame, and contempt, and reproach I receiv'd with gentleness and calmness of spirit: My good deeds were repaid with ingratitude, my miracles with blasphemies, and my doctrine with calumnies and vile misrepresentations.

THE SOUL.

II. Lord, since thou wert patient during
Q 4 thy

thy whole life, accomplishing, herein principally, the commandment of thy heavenly Father; it is very meet and right, that I, who am a wretched sinner, should patiently submit to thy holy will, and bear, for my own Salvation, the load of this corruptible life, so long as thou shalt think fit to continue me in it. For tho' the present life be burdensome and painful, yet by thy grace it is now become very meritorious; and by the contemplation of thy example, and that of thy Saints, it is render'd much easier, and more supportable to our weakness; yea and abundantly fuller of comfort too than it was heretofore under the Old Law, when the gate of Heaven remained shut, and the way to the high and holy Place seemed more dark and dim, and few applied themselves to seek a future and spiritual Kingdom. Nay more, those that were then righteous, and ordain'd to Salvation, could not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven before thy Passion, and the rigid satisfaction of thy holy Death.

III. O what thanks am I bound to render unto thee, that thou hast vouchsafed to shew unto me, and to all the Faithful, a direct and sure way to an everlasting Kingdom! For thy life is our way, and in the path of holy patience we walk to thee, who
art

art our Recompence and Crown. Hadst thou not gone before us, and shewn us the way, who would have the heart to follow? Alas! how many would hang back, and be quite distanc'd, if they had not thy glorious Example in their eye? Behold, we are still cool and lukewarm, after having heard so many miracles and precepts of thine: What would be our case, had we not so clear and shining a light to follow thee?

CHAP. XIX.

How we ought to bear Injuries; and of the Marks of a true Patience.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **W**HAT is it thou sayst, my Son? Cease thy complaints, upon the consideration of my sufferings, and those of other Saints. *Thou hast not yet resisted unto blood*^a. What thou sufferest, is inconsiderable, in comparison with those who have endured so many things, been so vehemently tempted, so grievously afflicted, so ma-

^a Heb. xii. 4.

nifoldly prov'd, and exercis'd. Thou oughtest therefore to call to mind the heavier burthens of others, to the end thou mayst more easily bear thy own very light ones. And if they do not seem very light unto thee, consider whether thy own impatience be not the cause of it. But whether they be light, or heavy, endeavour to bear all patiently.

II. The better and the more couragiously thou disposhest and preparest thy soul to suffer, the more wisely dost thou act, and the ^b greater shall be thy reward. Thou wilt also by this means lighten thy sufferings, and be enabled to bear them the better, as well through an honest endeavour to fore-arm thy self with resolution, as by being inur'd to suffer by custom and habit. And never talk after this manner: "I am
 " not able to bear this usage from such
 " or such a man: Nor are the things themselves such as I ought to bear: For he
 " has done me a very great injury, and
 " accuses me of those things which never
 " so much as enter'd my thoughts: Had
 " this been done by any other person, I
 " could have born it: There are some things

• In the original: *And the more thou meritest.*

" that

“ that I could away with well enough”. These are idle distinctions, and vain reasonings, which consider not the virtue of Patience it self, nor by whom it is to be hereafter crowned, but regard rather the relation and the condition of the person offending, and the nature and quality of the offence committed.

III. He is not a true Patient, who will bear but from whom he lifts, and but what he lifts. For the true Patient minds not who it is by whom he is exercised, whether by his Superiour, or Equal, or Inferiour; whether by a good, and holy; or by a perverse, and unworthy man. But from every creature indifferently and alike, how much soever, and as often soever as any adversity happens unto him, all this in the gross he receiveth thankfully as from the hand of GOD, and counteth it great gain; because nothing with GOD, tho’ never so slight and inconsiderable, if yet suffered for the sake of GOD, ^c shall be pass’d over unrewarded.

IV. Be ready armed therefore for the batel, if thou desire the glory of the conquest. Without contending thou canst not arrive

^c In the original: *Can possibly pass without merit.*

at the Crown of Patience. If thou refuse to suffer, thou refusest to be crowned. And if thou desire to be crowned, strive manfully, suffer patiently. Without labour, there is no coming at rest: And without fighting, there is no arriving at victory.

THE SOUL.

Lord, let that become possible to me by Grace, which seemeth impossible to me by Nature. Thou knowest that I can bear but little, and that I am easily overthrown even by a small puff of adversity. Grant that any tribulation, any chastisement for the sake and love of thy Name may be render'd joyous and welcome to me: For to suffer, and to be afflicted for thee, is exceedingly conducive to my soul's health.

CHAP. XX.

*Of the Confession of our Infirmary; and
of the Miseries of this Life.*

THE SOUL.

I. **I** Will confess my unrighteousness against my self: I will acknowledge unto thee, O Lord^a, my infirmity. It is but a little thing oftentimes, that casts me down, and overwhelms me with sorrow. I propose to act manfully; yet upon the surprize of a slight temptation, I am reduced to a great strait. A very trifle sometimes is the matter of a dangerous temptation. And whilst I think my self pretty safe; before I am aware, I find my self sometimes almost quite born down with a weak blast.

II. Consider therefore; O Lord, the humility of my confession; look down upon my frailty, unto thee perfectly well known. Have mercy upon me, and *take me out of the mire, that I sink not*^b, raise me up, that I be not utterly cast down. This is the thing, that galls me frequently, that stabs

^a Psal. xxxii. 5, 6.

^b Psal. lxix. 17.

me with remorse, and renders me confounded before thee; that I am so subject to fall, and so weak to resist my passions. And tho' I go not so far as to yield a consent, yet their very assaults are troublesome and grievous to me, and I am quite weary of a life led thus in a perpetual struggle and conflict with my self. Hereby my infirmity is made known unto me; in that evil thoughts, and fantasies and imaginations ever to be abominated, find an easy entrance, and are always much sooner suggested, than driven out again.

III. Most mighty GOD of *Israel*, thou jealous lover and tender embracer of faithful souls, O that thou wouldst look down with an eye of pity upon the travel, and anguish of thy servant; and assist him in all things whatsoever he shall aspire unto! Fortify me with strength from Heaven, lest the old man, this wretched flesh, which is not yet entirely subdued to the spirit, prevail and get the dominion over me: Against which I shall be obliged to struggle, so long as I breathe in this most miserable life. Alas! What a wretched life must this be, where Tribulations and Miseries are never wanting: Where snares and enemies, every where and in all things abound! For one tempta-

temptation, or tribulation withdrawing, another comes on: Yea, and before the former conflict is over, several new ones unexpectedly come upon us.

IV. And how is it possible to love a life, thus embitter'd, thus beset with Calamities and Miseries? Nay, can that deserve the very name of Life, which is productive of so many deaths, and plagues? And yet lov'd it is, and many seek content and happiness in it. The world is often blamed, as deceitful, and vain; yet it is not easily forsaken, because the flesh and its affections bear too great a sway. But some things incline us to love it, others to despise it. *The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and pride of life*^a, incline to the love of the world: But the Pains and Miseries that these vices and sins by a just Judgment draw after them, create in us in their turns a hatred, and loathing of the world.

V. But alas! the pleasure of sin overcomes the soul given up to the world, and she thinks delicacies to be under thorns; because she hath neither seen, nor tasted the sweetness that is in GOD, and the internal amiableness and charms of Virtue. But those,

^a 1 John. ii. 16.

on the other hand, who have gained an absolute contempt of the world, and make it their business to live unto God by a steady course of severe virtue; these are no strangers to the divine and unspeakable pleasures promised to the true Renouncers; and more clearly discern how grossly the world is mistaken, and what manifold cheats and impostures it suffers it self to be deluded with.

CHAP. XXI.

*That we ought to repose our Souls in God
above all Goods and Gifts of Nature
and Grace.*

THE SOUL.

I. **A**BOVE all things, and in all things, thou shalt repose thy self, O my soul, in the Lord evermore; because he is the eternal rest of the Saints. Grant me, sweetest and most loving Saviour, to rest in thee above all created things; above all health and beauty; above all glory and honour; above all power and dignity; above all knowledge and refined understanding; a-
8 bove

bove all riches and arts; above all chearfulness and exultation of spirit; above all reputation and praise; above all the sweets of comfort and consolation in affliction; above all hopes and promises; above all virtues and holy desires; above all the gifts and graces which thou thy self canst give and infuse; above all raptures and transports of joy, that the heart of man is capable of receiving and feeling: Finally, above Angels and Arch-angels, and above all the Host of Heaven; above all things visible and invisible; and above every thing which thou my GOD art not.

II. Because thou, my Lord and my GOD, art above all things superlatively Best: Thou alone most high: Thou alone most powerful: Thou alone most sufficient and most full: Thou alone most sweet and most abundantly comforting and refreshing: Thou alone most beautiful and most amazingly loving: Thou alone most noble and most glorious above all things: In whom all goods meet, as in their proper center, and are in their sovereign perfection, and ever were so, and shall be to all Eternity: And therefore poor and insufficient is it, whatsoever

* In the Original: *Above all Merits and holy Desires.*

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thou

thou givest me besides thy self, or revealest of thy self, or dost promise; whilst thou thy self art not seen, nor fully enjoy'd. Because indeed my heart cannot possibly have any true repose, nor be perfectly satisfied, till it rest in thee, and soar above all gifts and graces, and all created things whatsoever.

III. O thou dearest Spouse of my soul, *Jesus Christ*, source of most pure love, Sovereign Lord of universal Nature! *Who will give me the wings of true liberty, that I may take my flight, and rest in thee!* Oh! when shall it be granted me to be fully and entirely free, and to taste at leisure, how sweet thou art, my Lord and my God! When shall I gather up my self wholly into thee, and have all my thoughts swallowed up in the contemplation of thy beauties, so as for love of thee, to forget and perfectly lose my self, and to have no taste or sense of any thing but thee alone, in a manner infinitely raised above all sense, and not known to every body! At present I groan frequently, and bear with pain the weight of my misery. Because many evils occur in this vale of tears, which often disturb my spirit, deject and grieve, cloud and darken my mind; which often obstruct my endeavours, and distract my thoughts, or allure
and

and entangle my affections; so that I cannot have a free approach to thee, nor enjoy thy ravishing embraces, in company with the blessed Spirits for evermore. Incline thine ears to my sighing, and remember my manifold desolation upon earth.

IV. O *Jesus*, thou ineffable splendor of eternal glory, thou only solace of the pilgrim soul in her absence from thee; my heart, without voice or language, is present with thee, and speaketh unto thee in silent tears and groans unutterable. "How long
" will my Lord, how long will he delay his
" coming? O that he would come to me
" his poor afflicted servant, and make me
" glad with the joy of his countenance! O
" that he would put forth his hand, and
" snatch me, wretched man, from every an-
" guish! Come, Lord *Jesus*, come quick-
" ly; for without thee, no day, no hour
" will pass with joy or comfort: For thou
" art my comfort, thou art my joy, and
" without thee my table is empty. I am
" wretched, and in a manner imprisoned,
" and loaded with irons; till thou revive me
" with the light of thy presence, and restore
" me to liberty, and shew me the favour of
" thy countenance.

R 2

V. Let

V. Let others seek instead of thee any
 “ thing else whatsoever liketh them: as for
 “ my self, no other thing pleaseth, nor shall
 “ please me, but thou, my GOD, my hope,
 “ my everlasting Salvation. I will not keep
 “ silence, nor cease to pray, till thy grace
 “ return, and thou speak inwardly to my
 “ soul.

JESUS-CHRIST.

Behold here I am: Behold I am come
 unto thee, because thou invokedst me. Thy
 tears, and the longing desire of thy soul,
 thy humiliation, and the contrition of thy
 heart, have moved my bowels, and brought
 me down unto thee.

THE SOUL.

And I said: Lord, I called thee, and de-
 fired to enjoy thee, being ready to forsake
 all things for thee. For thou first excitedst
 me to seek thee. Blessed therefore be thou,
 O Lord, for this marvellous condescen-
 sion and goodness which thou hast shewed
 to thy servant, according to the multitude
 of thy mercy.

VI. What hath thy servant more to say
 in thy presence, but to humble himself pro-
 foundly before thee, ever mindful of his
 own iniquity and vileness? For there is
 none

none like unto thee in all the Wonders of Heaven and Earth. Thy Works are very good, thy Judgments true, and by thy Providence all things are governed. Praise and glory therefore be rendred unto thee, O thou eternal Wisdom of the Father: Let my mouth, my soul, and all created things together, laud and bless thee world without end. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXII.

Of the Remembrance of the manifold Benefits of GOD.

THE SOUL.

OPEN my understanding, O Lord, in thy law, and teach me to walk in thy precepts^a. Grant me to have a perfect knowledge of thy will, and with great reverence, and diligent consideration to recollect thy Benefits, as well in general, as in particular; to the end I may be thereby able worthily to thank thee for them. But know, and confess, that I am not able to

^a Psal. cxix.

render thee due praise and thanks for the very meanest of thy favours. I am less than the least of thy mercies: And when I consider thy noble works and infinite perfections, my spirit is overwhelm'd and swallowed up in admiration of thy excellent greatness.

II. All our advantages and blessings of soul and body, and what things soever we possess, outwardly, or inwardly, naturally, or supernaturally, all are the effects of thy bounty, and speak thee beneficent, tenderly kind, and good, from whom we have received all Goods. And altho' one hath received more, and another fewer, yet all are thine: And without thee, not even the least can be had. He that hath received greater gifts, cannot glory in his own Merit, nor be lifted up above others, nor insult over his weaker Brother: Because he is the greatest, and best man, that ascribes least to himself, and is most humble and devout in his grateful acknowledgements. And by how much any one thinks himself the vilest, and unworthiest of all men, so much the fittier disposed and qualify'd he is for the receiving a more abundant measure of thy gifts and graces.

III. Again, he that hath received more sparingly, ought not to grieve, not to repine
and

and murmur, or to envy the larger portion of his wealthier neighbour: But rather to keep his eye intent upon thee, and more highly to extol thy goodness in dispensing thy gifts so abundantly, so freely, and voluntarily, and without respect of persons. All things come from thee, and therefore in all things thou art to be praised. Thou knowest what is expedient to be given to every person: And why one man hath more, and another less, this is not in us, but for thee only to discern, who weighest every one's respective Merit.

IV. Wherefore, Lord God, I account it even a great mercy, not to have many of those qualities and advantages, which outwardly, and to the eye of the world, appear glorious, and worthy of praise and admiration: So that a man, upon the view of his poverty, and the meanness of his person, should be so far from being disquieted, or griev'd, or dejected, that it ought rather to be matter of comfort, and joy to him: Because thou, O God, madest choice of the poor, and humble, and contemptible of this world, for thy particular Friends, and Dometicks. A proof of this are thy Apostles themselves, whom *thou hast made Princes*

in all lands^b. Yet these conversed without complaint in the world, so humble and meek, so perfectly void of all malice, and worldly guile, that they even *rejoic'd to suffer shame and reproach for thy Name*; and embrac'd of themselves with great eagerness of affection, what the world hath an abhorrence of.

V. Nothing therefore ought to rejoice the heart of a true Lover of thee, and thankful acknowledger of thy Benefits, equal to the accomplishment of thy will in him, and of the good pleasure of thy eternal disposition towards him: Wherewith he ought to be contented, and pleas'd, to such a degree, as to be abas'd with equal satisfaction, as others are exalted: And to be as easie, and well contented in the lowest, as in the highest Place: And to be as free to be despicable, and abject, without Name and reputation, as to be the most illustrious and greatest Potentate upon earth. For the consideration of thy will, and the zeal for thy glory ought to weigh down all other regards; and to be a more powerful consolation, and ampler satisfaction to him, than all the Benefits and Blessings that have been, or can be conferr'd upon him.

^b Plal. xxxv. 17. ^c Acts v. 41.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of Four things that bring great Peace.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. SON, I will now teach thee the way to Peace, and to true Liberty.

THE SOUL.

Be pleas'd, O Lord, to do as thou hast said; for such Instruction will be pleasant to hear.

JESUS-CHRIST.

Make it thy business, Son, to do another's will, rather than thine own.

Prefer evermore a moderate fortune before abundance.

Seek always the lowermost place, and to be subject and obedient to every body.

Let this be thy constant wish and prayer, that the will of GOD may be perfectly fulfilled in thee. Behold such a man enters directly into the Region of Peace and Quiet.

THE

THE SOUL.

II. Lord, this short Instruction of thine containeth in it much perfection. It is concise in words, but full of sense, and abundant in fruit. For could it be faithfully observ'd by me, trouble and disorder would not so easily spring up in me. For whenever I feel my self disquieted, and oppress'd in spirit, I find my self to have gone aside from this Doctrine. But do thou, who canst do all things, and evermore lovest the soul's Proficiency, encrease in me thy grace more and more, to the end I may be able to fulfil thy Instruction, and to accomplish my own Salvation.

A Prayer against evil Thoughts.

III. **G**O not far from me, O my God: my God, haste thee to help me: For a multitude of Thoughts are risen up against me, and terrible fears, afflicting my soul. How shall I pass them unhurt? How shall I break my way through them?

JESUS-CHRIST.

I will go before thee, and will humble the lofty ones of the earth. I will open the
the

the doors of the prison, and will reveal unto thee hidden secrets^a.

THE SOUL.

Do, Lord, according to thy saying, and let all evil Thoughts *fly before thee*. This is my hope, and only comfort, to fly to thee in every tribulation, to trust in thee, from the bottom of my heart to call upon thee, and patiently to wait thy consolation.

A Prayer for Illumination of Soul.

IV. **E**Nlighten me, sweetest Saviour, with the bright beams of internal light; and chase away from the habitation of my heart, all the clouds and darkness that hang upon it. Call home my thoughts, restrain all their wandrings, and repulse the temptations which furiously assault me. Fight thou my battels, and with an invincible arm slay mine enemies; even all those evil lusts and passions, that are ever striving to destroy me; that by virtue of thy power Peace may ensue, and thy holy Temple, that is, my purified Soul, may resound with abundant hallelujahs and songs of praise.

^a Isai. xlv. 2, 3.

^b Psa'. lxxviii. 1.

Command the winds and the tempests; Say unto the Sea, *Peace, be still*; and to the north-wind, *Blow no more*; and there shall immediately be a profound calm.

V. *Send forth thy Light and thy Truth*, that they may shine upon this barren, unfruitful soil, for such is my heart, till warmed and inlightened by thee. Send down thy grace from above: Water my heart plenteously with the dew of Heaven: Let the showers of devotion descend to moisten the face of the earth, and to cause it to produce good and excellent fruits. Raise up my soul press'd down with the weight of my sins, draw up all my affections, and fix them upon heavenly things; that the delicious taste of the Bread of Angels may give me a holy disdain and loathing of the Garlick and Onions of *Egypt*.

VI. Snatch me away forthwith, and rescue me from all the deceitful pleasures, and short-liv'd comforts of the creatures: For no created thing is capable of giving ample content, and full satisfaction to my desires. Knit and unite me to thy self by a band of love never to be dissolv'd; since thou alone canst suffice thy Lover, and without thee all things are vanity and emptiness.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of the shunning of all curious Inquiry into the Life and Conversation of others.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, avoid Curiosity, and trouble not thy self with vain unprofitable cares. What is this or that to thee? *Follow thou me.* For what is it to thee, whether that man be so, or so; or this man, thus, or thus, and do, or speak this or that? Thou art not obliged to answer for others, but shalt give account for thy self; Why therefore dost thou perplex and intangle thy self? Behold I know all men: Nothing that is done under the Sun, escapes my observation: I know how it is with every man; what he thinks, what he desires, and what is the aim and drift of all his actions. All things therefore are to be left to me: But do thou study thy own peace, and leave the unquiet to be as unquiet as they please. Whatsoever they shall have done or said, shall come upon them, because they cannot deceive me.

II. Be

II. Be not concerned for the shadow of a great Name, nor for a numerous acquaintance, nor for the private love and affection of men. For these things cause great distraction of spirit, and exceedingly cloud and darken the understanding. I should gladly communicate my instructions, and reveal my secrets unto thee, if thou wouldst diligently watch my coming, and open the door of thy heart unto me. Keep thy self upon thy guard, watch and pray, and humble thy self in all things.

CHAP. XXV.

In what things solid, unshaken Peace of Heart, and true Spiritual Proficiency consisteth.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, it is I that said: *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.* Peace is what all desire, but the things belonging to true Peace, are the care of but

few. My Peace is with the meek and lowly in heart. Thy Peace will consist in much patience. If thou wilt give ear to me, and hearken to my voice, thou mayst enjoy much Peace.

THE SOUL.

What should I do, Lord?

JESUS-CHRIST.

In every thing keep a good guard upon thy self, both as to what thou dost, and what thou sayst: And let thy whole intention and aim be directed to this single point, of pleasing me only, and of desiring or seeking nothing out of me. In the next place, never put a rash censure upon other people's words or actions; nor intermeddle in matters that nothing concern thee; And thus doing, thou mayst pass thy life with few and light troubles.

II. For to escape trouble altogether, and to feel no uneasiness at all in body or mind, is not consistent with the nature of thy present condition, but is the state of everlasting Rest, and of that place, where pains and evils enter not. Do not therefore imagine, that thou hast then found true Peace, when thou feelest no pain or

uneasiness: Nor that all goes well with thee, if thou hast no body to cross and oppose thee: Nor that this is Perfection, when all things succeed according to thy heart's desire: Nor entertain any high opinion of thy self, or conclude thy self a particular Favourite of GOD, because thou hast sometimes a fervent piety, and feelest, in thy devotions, the sweet effusions of my Spirit within thee: Because a true lover of virtue is not discovered by these marks; nor doth true Proficiency, and spiritual Perfection, consist in these things.

THE SOUL.

III. Wherein then, Lord?

JESUS-CHRIST.

In offering up, and resigning thy self with all thy heart and soul to the will of GOD, never seeking thine own, neither in small matters, nor in great; neither in time, nor in eternity: so as with the same serenity of mind and countenance, to abide in a constant state of thanksgiving, amidst all events, whether prosperous or adverse, weighing all things in one and the same scale, even in the balance of the Sanctuary, which is the Divine Will. If thou art so courageous, so
resolute

resolute and persevering in hope, as, when deprived of inward consolation, to prepare thy heart to undergo yet sharper trials, without justifying thy self, as though thou hadst not deserved to suffer such distresses; but on the contrary, justifying me in all my dispositions, and lauding and exalting my holy Name: Then thou walkest in the direct way to Peace, and mayst support thy self with an assured hope of seeing my face again in great joy and jubilee. Finally, if thou arrive to a compleat and absolute contempt of thy self, know that then thou shalt enjoy abundance of Peace, even as much as is possible for thee to do in this thy state of Pilgrimage here upon earth.

CHAP. XXVI.

*Of the high Prerogative of a free Soul,
which is the Reward of humble Prayer,
more than of Reading.*

THE SOUL.

I. **L**ORD, this is the Property of a Perfect Man, never to unbend his thoughts from the contemplation of heavenly

venly things: And amidst the numerous cares of life, to pass through, as it were, without care: And this, not by way of indolence and stupidity, but by a certain Privilege of a Soul truly free, and disengaged from all inordinate affection to the creatures.

II. Preserve me, I beseech thee, my most merciful GOD, from the cares of this life, that I may not be too much entangled thereby; from the sundry necessities of the Body, that I may not be ensnared with pleasure; from all the obstacles and impediments of the Soul, to the end I may not be broken and dejected by troubles and afflictions. I mean not, from those things, which the vain men of the world court with the whole bent of their Soul; but from those miseries, which as a Punishment, and as the general Curse of Mortality weigh down and retard the Soul of thy Servant, that she cannot enter, so often as she would, into the Liberty of the Spirit.

III. O my GOD, Sweetness unutterable, im-bitter unto me all carnal consolation, drawing me off from the love of eternal things, and perniciously alluring me to it self, by the appearance of some delectable and present Good. Let not, O my GOD, let not flesh and

and blood overcome me: Let not the world, and the transient glory thereof, deceive me: Let not the Devil, and his subtilty, supplant me. Grant me courage to resist, patience to endure, constancy to persevere. Give me, instead of all wordly consolations, the most sweet *Uction* of thy Spirit; and instead of carnal love, infuse into me the love of thy Name.

IV. Behold meat, drink, raiment, and other necessities, appertaining to the sustenance of the Body, are a load to the fervent Spirit. Grant me to use such refreshments moderately, and not to be entangled with an over-great desire of them. To cast away all is not lawful, because Nature must be supported; but to look out for superfluities and delicacies, this the Divine Law forbiddeth: for otherwise the flesh would rebel against the spirit. Between these extremes, let thy hand, I beseech thee, direct and guide me, that I exceed not on either side.

CHAP. XXVII.

*That Self-Love is the grand Obstruction
in our pursuit of the Sovereign Good.*

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, it is necessary for thee to give all for the purchase of all, and to retain nothing of thy self. Know assuredly, that the Love of thy self is more prejudicial to thee, than any worldly thing whatsoever. According to the degree of the love and inclination, which thou bearest to any thing, so in proportion it cleaveth unto thee more or less. If thy Love be pure, simple, and well-regulated, nothing shall have the power to enslave thee. Covet nothing which thou art not permitted to have. Reserve nothing which may be an obstruction to thee, and rob thee of internal Liberty. It is strange, that thou shouldst not resign thy self to me entirely and from the bottom of thy heart, together with all things whatsoever thou canst either desire or possess in this world.

II. Why dost thou consume thy days in unprofitable sorrow? Why dost thou waste thy
thy

thy strength with superfluous cares? Stand to my good pleasure, submit all to me, and nothing shall be able to hurt thee. If thou seek this, or that, or desire to be here, or there, for the sake of thy own interest, or for the better enjoyment of thy self in ease and pleasure; thou shalt never obtain repose, nor be free from disquietude: Because in every state there will still be found some defect; and in every place some body to oppose thee.

III. No external Good therefore is of any service towards content, by being either obtain'd, or increas'd; but rather by being despis'd, and rooted utterly out of the heart. Which is to be understood not only of estate and wealth, but also of an ambitious pursuit of honour, and of an affectation of vain praise; all which things pass away with the world. As for place, there is little security or protection in that, if the spirit of fervour be absent: And that, outwardly sought, peace will be of short continuance, if destitute of a true foundation in the disposition of the heart; that is to say; unless thou art rooted, and grounded in me. If this be not thy case, change thou mayst, but better thy self thou canst not. For the first occasion will discover to thee

what thou art, and thou wilt find the same, yea, greater inconveniences, than those thou meantest to fly.

A Prayer for Purity of Heart, and heavenly Wisdom.

IV. **C**ONfirm and establish me, O God, with the grace of thy Holy Spirit. Grant me to be *strengthen'd with might in the inner man*, and to empty my heart of all unprofitable solicitude and anxiety; and not to set my affections upon any earthly thing whatsoever, considerable or inconsiderable: But to look upon all things as passing away; and my self also as shortly to pass away together with them: Because nothing is durable *under the Sun, where all is vanity and vexation of spirit*^a. O the Wisdom of that man, who thus considers!

V. Give me, O Lord, heavenly Wisdom, to the end I may learn, above all things to seek and to find thee; above all things to relish and to love thee: And as for other things, to regard them as they are in themselves, and according to that order wherein thy Providence hath placed them. Grant me

^a Eccles. ii. 11.

prudently to decline the careffes and soothing of the flatterer, and patiently to bear the contradictions and reproaches of the gainsayer and slanderer: Since this is a point of great Wisdom, not to be moved with every wind, or blast of words, nor to lend an ear to the Siren's destructive charms: For so we shall safely proceed in our Christian course.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Against the Tongues of Detractors and Evil-speakers.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. SON, resent it not, nor trouble thy self, if some persons think ill of thee, and speak that which thou wouldest not willingly hear. Thou oughtest to have a worse opinion of thy self than any one else can have, and to believe none weaker than thy self. If thou walkest spiritually and from within, thou wilt not much value flying words. It is an argument of no small prudence, to keep silence in an evil time, and to turn inwardly to me, and not to be dis-

turbed at any human judgment pronounc'd of thee.

II. Let not thy peace depend upon the Tongues of men. For whether they interpret thy actions well or ill, thou art not therefore another man. Where is true peace, and true glory? Is it not in me? And he that covets not to please men, nor fears to displease them, shall enjoy great peace. From inordinate love, and vain fear springeth all disquiet of heart, and distraction and perplexity of spirit.

CHAP. XXIX.

How GOD is to be invok'd and bless'd in time of Tribulation.

THE SOUL.

I. **B**lessed be thy Name, O Lord, for ever; who in thy Fatherly wisdom hast thought fit that this Trial, and Tribulation should come upon me. I am not able to fly it, but am forc'd to flee unto thee; to the end thou mayst succour me, and turn it into a Blessing to me: Lord, I am now in Tribulation, and my heart within me is troubled,

troubled, and I am sorely distressed by my present Suffering. And now, dearest Father, *what shall I say?* I find my self incompass'd with grief, and overwhelm'd with sorrow. ^a *Save me from this hour: But for this cause came I unto this hour*, that thou mightest have the glory of my deliverance, after having perfectly humbled me. Let it be thy good pleasure, O Lord, to deliver me: For poor wretch that I am, what can I do, and whither shall I go without thee? Grant me patience, this time also, O Lord. Help me, my GOD, and I shall not be afraid, be the load of my pressures never so heavy.

II. And now in the midst of my Anxiety what shall I say? Lord, *Thy will be done*. I have well deserv'd Tribulation and Anguish. Assuredly, endure it I must; (and O that it be with patience!) even until the storm be over-past, and a calm succeed. Yet doubtless thy Almighty hand is able to remove this Temptation also from me, or to assuage the violence thereof, that I utterly sink not under it; as thou hast often heretofore dealt with me, my GOD, my Mercy. And the greater the difficulty of the

^a John xii. 27.

deliverance with regard to my self, so much the easier unto thee is this change of the *right hand of the Most Highest*^b.

CHAP. XXX.

Of craving the Divine Assistance; and Confidence of recovering Grace.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, *I am the Lord, a strong hold in the day of tribulation*^a. Come unto me, at what time soever it goeth not well with thee. This is the thing, which most of all obstructs Celestial consolation, that thou art too slow in betaking thy self to Prayer. For before thou applyest to me in good earnest, thou seekest in the mean time sundry comforts, and divertest thy self with external recreations. And hence it comes to pass that all other contrivances avail but little, till thou come to consider, that *it is I that am the Saviour of them which put their trust in me*^b: And that without me, no succour is strong,

^b Psal. lxxvii. 10.

^a Nahum i. 7.

^b Psal. xvii. 7.

no counsel profitable, no nor any remedy durable. But now having recover'd thy breath after the Tempest, be thou renew'd and re-invigorated again in the light of my mercies. For I am near at hand (saith the Lord) not only to re-establish thee in thy former peace, but to recompense thee also with fresh and more abundant measures of Grace.

II. *Is there any thing too hard for me^c?* Or shall I be like unto him that promiseth, and performeth not? Where is thy Faith? Stand firm, and persevere. Bear up with long-suffering and patience, and quit thy self like a man: Consolation will surely come in due time. Expect me: Again I say, expect me: I will come, and heal thee. What afflicts thee, is a temptation; and that which frights thee, is a vain fear. What is the gain of tormenting thy self about future events, but the heaping of one sorrow upon another? *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof^d.* It is vain and unprofitable to be dejected, or exalted with future contingencies; which perchance shall never come to pass.

^c Jerem. xxxii. 27.

^d Matth. vi. 34.

III. But it is incident to Man to be deluded with such kind of imaginations: And it is a mark of a mind as yet weak and feeble, to be so easily seduced by the suggestions of the Enemy. For he matters not, so he delude and deceive thee, whether it be with things real or imaginary: Whether he overthrow a man with the love of present, or dread of future things. Wherefore *let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*^e. *Believe in me*, and repose confidence in my mercy. I am often then nearest thee, when thou supposest me at the greatest distance from thee. When thou givest all almost for gone, then many times art thou^f upon the point of receiving a more than ordinary measure of peace. All is not lost, when a thing happens contrary to thy expectation. Thou oughtest not to judge of thy estate by the present posture, and disquietude of thy mind: Nor to abandon thy self in such sort to any heaviness, be the cause what it will; nor so to interpret it, as tho' all hope of recovery, or rising again, were taken away.

^e John xiv. 1, 2.
point of meriting most.

^f In the Original; *Upon the*

IV. Imagine not that thou art forsaken altogether, when I send thee some affliction for a time, or even withdraw the consolations thou art so fond of: For this is the way which leadeth to the Kingdom of Heaven. And this without doubt, is more expedient for thee, and for the rest of my servants, that ye be exercised with adversities, than if ye had all things to your wish. I understand the thoughts of the heart: I know therefore that it is very expedient for thy Salvation, that thou be sometimes left in a state of dryness and barrenness, without gust or relish; lest thou be lifted up with thy good success, and vainly please thyself with the fond imagination of being what thou art not. What I gave, that I can take away, and restore it again, when it seems good to me.

V. After I have given it thee, it continues mine: When I have withdrawn it, I have taken away nothing that was thine: Because *every good gift, and every perfect gift cometh from me* ⁸. If I send thee heaviness, or any adversity, be not impatient under it, nor let thy heart sink within thee; I can raise thee up in an instant, and change

⁸ James i. 17.

all thy sadness into joy. Nevertheless I am just, and greatly to be praised, when I deal thus with thee.

VI. If thou wert wise, and didst consider things according to truth, thou wouldst see no reason to give thy self up to so much dejection and disconsolateness, in adversities and sufferings; but rather to rejoice, and give thanks; yea, to count it all joy, when I chastise thee with sorrows and afflictions, and spare thee not. *As my Father hath loved me, even so love I you*^h, said I to my Disciples: Whom certainly I sent not out to temporal joys, but to sharp conflicts: Not to honours, but to contumelies and contempts: Not to idleness and sloth, but to labour and travel: Not to rest and repose, but to bring forth much fruit with patience. Remember these words, my Son.

^h John xv. 9.

CHAP. XXXI.

Of the Disregard of all Creatures, in order to find the Creator.

THE SOUL.

I. **L**ORD, I stand greatly in need of a yet larger portion of Grace, if I must arrive at such a state of Perfection, as that no person, nor any of the creatures may be able to be a hindrance or obstruction to me. For so long as any created thing checks and retards me, I am not able freely to mount unto thee. He desired to mount freely, who said: *Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest!* What more quiet, and more at ease, than the single eye? And what more free than the man that desireth nothing upon earth? A man ought therefore to soar above, and leave behind him all created beings, and utterly to forsake himself, and in a transport of soul to stand, and contemplate thee the Creator of all things, as infinitely transcending, and bearing no

^a Psal. lv. 6.

manner of resemblance to the creatures. And unless a man be disengaged from all the creatures, he will not be able freely to intend divine things. For the true reason why so few Contemplatists are to be found, is, because so few know how to sequester themselves wholly from the creatures, and from these perishing Goods.

II. In order to arrive at this state, a great degree of Grace is requisite to raise up the soul, and transport it above it self. And unless a man, by an elevation of spirit, be disengaged from all created things, and wholly united unto GOD, all his knowledge, and all the good qualities which he may otherwise have, are of no great weight or value. He will long remain in an infant-state, and lye groveling here below, who esteems any thing great, save only the One Infinite Eternal Good. And whatsoever is not GOD, is nothing, and ought to be esteemed as nothing. There is a great difference between the wisdom of an illuminated, and devout man, and the pompous knowledge of a learned and studious Divine. Much nobler is that learning which flows from above by divine influence, than that which is painfully acquired by human capacity.

III. Many

III. Many there are who are fond of Contemplation; but they neglect those things which are necessary to qualify them for it. It is a great impediment, the resting so much upon Images, and exterior and sensible things, and taking little care about the perfect mortification of our selves. I know not how to account for it, nor can I think by what spirit we are led, nor what we propose to our selves, we that call our selves Christians, and by our very Profession have renounc'd the World; to take so much pains and thought for transitory and worthless things, and to be so very careless of our spiritual concerns, as rarely to recollect our selves, and to consider seriously the state of our souls.

IV. Alas! After a slight recollection, we presently fly out of doors: Nor do we weigh our actions by a strict and severe examination. We observe not which way our affections lean, nor whither they tend: Nor do we seriously bewail the exceeding impurity and corruptness of every thing in us. *For all Flesh had corrupted his way^b*, and thereupon followed the general Deluge. Since therefore our inward affections and

^b Gen. vi. 12.

inclinations are all corrupt, it must needs be that the following actions, the signs of the want of inward vigour, be corrupt also. From a pure heart proceeds the fruit of a good life.

V. What, or how much a man hath done, is enquir'd into : But with what sincerity, with what zeal, with what honest intention he did it, we trouble not our selves to consider. Whether a man be valiant, rich, beautiful, able in business, a good Writer, a fine Singer, or a skilful Workman, these things we take care to inform our selves of: But how humble and poor in spirit he is, how patient and meek, how devout, and spiritual, is rarely mention'd. Nature looks at the outside of a man, Grace regards the inside only. The former is oftentimes deceived and disappointed: The latter places her hope in GOD, and is never mistaken, never deluded by false expectations.

CHAP. XXXII.

*Of Self-denial, and the Renouncing of all
Desire.*

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. SON, thou canst not arrive at a state of perfect Freedom, unless thou dost absolutely and entirely deny thy self. All self-lovers, and persuers of their own worldly interests and advantages, are Captives : So are all covetous persons, all that have any irregular desires, the busy and envious, the unsettled, and wanderers from place to place, seeking always their own ease and satisfaction, not the things belonging to *Jesus Christ*, tho' they often pretend this, and make a fair shew and semblance of it; which shall not stand. For all that is not of God, shall perish. Mark well this short and consummate Maxim: *Quit all things, and thou shalt find all things: Let go desire, and thou shalt lay hold of peace.* Roll this again and again in thy thoughts: And when thou hast transcrib'd it into thy practice, thou shalt understand all things.

THE SOUL.

II. Lord, this is not the work of a single day, nor an exercise for little ones: Yea, in this short Sentence is contain'd the utmost Perfection of ^a a Christian.

JESUS-CHRIST.

Son, thou oughtest not to start aside, nor presently to be discouraged, upon hearing the name of Perfection, but rather to be animated and incited to higher and nobler attainments, and with an ardent affection at least, to aspire after them. Oh! that it were so with thee, and that thou wert come up to this pitch, to be no longer a lover of thy self, but to submit thy self entirely ^b to the obedience of my commands, and to the disposals of my Providence! Then should I be well pleas'd with thee, and thy whole life would pass in joy and peace. Alas! thou hast many things still to abandon; which till thou hast resigned up wholly unto me, the happiness thou aimest at can never be obtained. ^c *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tryed in the fire, that thou mayst*

^a In the original *Of the Religious*

^b In the Original; *To the Obedience of my Commands, and of his, that I have set over thee.*

^c Rev. iii. 18.

be rich; that is to say, Heavenly Wisdom, which treadeth under foot all inferiour and worldly things. Renounce earthly wisdom, that is, all desire of the esteem, and approbation of men, together with all inclination to gratify and please thy self after the guise and fashion of this world.

III. I have told thee, that the things which are lightly esteemed, must be purchased at the expence of those, which the world esteems most precious. For nothing is more despised and mean in common reputation, nothing more neglected and forgotten, than true Heavenly Wisdom; which thinketh not highly of it self, nor seeketh to be magnified upon earth: Which many commend in word, but renounce in their practice. And yet this Wisdom, poor and despicable as it appears, is *that pearl of great price*^d, which is hidden from many.

^d Matth. xiii. 46.

CHAP. XXXIII.

*Of the Instability of the Heart: And that
our Intention is to be directed fully and
finally to GOD alone.*

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. SON, depend not much upon the present disposition of thy mind; because it will soon change to the direct contrary. So long as thou livest, thou wilt be subject to change, whether thou wilt or no. Sometimes thou wilt find thy self disposed to mirth, sometimes to melancholy; sometimes thou wilt be sedate and calm, at other times disorder'd and confus'd; this hour fervent and devout, the next lukewarm and cold; diligent and active to day, slothful and heavy to morrow; grave and serious now, and anon again, light and trifling. But the man that is wise and well instructed in the Spirit, is advanced above this changeable Region; not heeding what he feels within himself, nor from what quarter the wind of instabillity blows; but being ever careful to direct the whole intention of his mind, that is, all his designs and actions,

to

to one right and excellent end. For by this method he shall be able to continue always the same, always unshaken and unmoved; *the single eye* of his intention, amidst so many various events, being continually, without bending or turning, pointed and fix'd upon me alone.

II. Now by how much the purer this eye of the intention is, with so much the more firmness and steadiness will men pass through the sundry storms of life. But in many the eye of the pure intention is dim: For it is easily diverted to some object of pleasure, that presents it self: It being very rare to find any one entirely free from the blemish of self-seeking. Thus the *Jews* heretofore came to *Bethany*, to *Martha* and *Mary*; not for the sake of *Jesus* only, but to see *Lazarus* also. The eye of the intention therefore must be purified and cleansed, to the end it may be simple, and right; and beyond all the various prospects of pleasure or profit, which lie between, must be directed to, and kept intent upon me only.

CHAP. XXXIV.

*That the Soul that loves GOD tastes him
in all things and above all things.*

I. **L**O my GOD, and all things! What would I have more, and what greater felicity can I possibly desire? O sweet and savoury Expression! But to him that loveth the Word; and not *the world, neither the things that are in the world*^a. My GOD and all things. To him that understandeth, enough is said: And to repeat it a thousand times, is pleasant unto him that loveth. For when thou art present, all things are delicious: But when thou art absent, every thing is nauseous. Thou calmest the troubled heart, and givest unto it great peace, and the joy of harvest. Thou causest us to have a right judgment in all things, and to make every thing matter of thy praise: Nor can any thing without thee please long; but if it be agreeable and of grateful relish, to make it so, thy Grace must be present, and it must be seasoned with the seasoning of thy Wisdom.

^a John iii. 17.

II. To him that relishes thee, what can relish amiss? And to whom thou art disgustful, what to such a palate can possibly be relishing? But the wise of this world, and such as favour the things of the flesh, are defective in thy Wisdom; for in the world is found abundant vanity, in the flesh death. But they who follow thee by a contempt of the things of the world, and mortification of the flesh, prove themselves the true wise men: Because they are translated from vanity to Truth, and from the flesh to the spirit. These are the men that relish GOD: And whatsoever of good or delectable is found in the creatures, they refer it all to the praise and glory of their Creator. Notwithstanding great, infinitely great is the difference between the taste and relish of the Creator, and of the creature; of eternity, and of time; of light uncreated, and light illuminated.

III. O Light eternal, incomparably surpassing all created lights, shoot down thy bright beams from the highest Heavens, and penetrate with thy almighty radiancy, the very innermost folds and recesses of my heart! Purifie, rejoice, illuminate, quicken and enliven my spirit with all its powers and faculties, to cleave unto thee with
ravishments

ravishments and ecstasies of triumphant joy. O when will that blessed, that most desirable hour come, that thou mayst satisfy me with thy presence, and be unto me all in all! As long as this shall not be granted, so long shall my joy not be full. Alas! alas! The Old Man still liveth in me, he is not wholly crucified, he is not perfectly dead. Still he lusteth strongly against the Spirit. He raiseth wars in the Region within, and suffereth not the Kingdom of my Soul to be in peace.

IV. But do thou, who *controllest the power of the sea, and stillest the raging of the waves thereof*^b, arise; assist me. *Scatter the Nations that delight in war*^c: Break them in pieces with thy mighty power: Display, I beseech thee, thy marvellous greatness, and let thy right hand be glorified; since there is no other hope, nor refuge for me, but in thee my Lord God.

^b Psal. lxxxix. 10.

^c Psal. lxxviii. 30.

CHAP. XXXV.

That there is no security from Temptation in this Life.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. SON, thou art never secure in this Life; but so long as thou livest, thou shalt always have need of spiritual armour. Thou art compass'd with enemies, and they attack thee on the right, and on the left. If therefore thou cover not thy self on every side with the buckler of patience, thou shalt not long continue unwounded. Furthermore, if thou fix not thy heart entirely upon me, with a sincere resolution of suffering all things for my sake, thou wilt not be able to sustain the heat of the engagement, nor to reach the triumphant Palm of the Saints in Bliss. Thou oughtest therefore courageously to break through all, and with a strong arm to bear down whatsoever opposeth thee. *For to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden Manna*^a; but plenty of misery is re-

^a Rev. ii. 17.

serv'd for the portion of the faint-hearted and slothful.

II. If thou seek rest in this Life, how then wilt thou arrive at the Everlasting rest? Prepare not thy self for much rest, but for great patience. Seek true peace, not on earth, but in Heaven: Not in Man, nor in any other creature, but in GOD only. For the love of GOD, thou oughtest contentedly to endure all things; labours, and sorrows, temptations, vexations, persecutions, anxieties, necessities, infirmities and diseases, injuries, affronts, evil-speakings, reprehensions, cruel humblings, bitter reproaches, chastisements, and despisings. These things are helps to virtue: These try the fresh unexperienc'd soldier of *Christ*: These thorns compose the Celestial Crown. I will repay an eternal recompence for a short hardship, and an endless glory for a momentary shame.

III. Thinkest thou, that thou shalt always have spiritual consolations at will? My Saints had not so, but frequent heavinesses, and diverse temptations, sad discomforts, and sore desertions. But in all these streights they behaved themselves with invincible patience, and placed all their confidence in GOD, and not in themselves: Being
assur'd

assur'd that the sufferings of this present time were not worthy to be compared with the glory that should be revealed in them^b. Wouldst thou have that joy immediately, which so many Saints after many tears, and great travels, hardly at last obtained? Wait thou the Lord's leisure, act courageously, and be strong^c, distrust me not, depart not from me: But expose constantly body and soul for the glory of GOD. I will recompense an hundred fold: I will be with thee in every tribulation.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Against the vain Judgments of Men.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, establish thy heart firmly in the Lord, and fear not the Judgments or censures of Men, whilst thy own conscience bears testimony to thy piety and innocence. It is a good, and a blessed thing to suffer so; nor will this be grievous to the humble heart, and which trusteth in

^b Rom. viii. 18.

^c Psa. xxvii. 16.

GOD more than in it self. The opinions of Men are as many and as different as their persons; and therefore no great heed is to be given to them. Besides, to satisfy all is impossible. Altho' *Paul* endeavour'd to please all in the Lord, and *was made all things to all Men*^a; yet *with him it was a very small thing, to be judged of Man's Judgment*^b.

II. He labour'd to the utmost of his ability and power for the edification and salvation of others: But even the utmost he could do was not sufficient to prevent his being sometimes judg'd, or despis'd by others. Therefore he committed all to GOD, who knew all: And skreen'd himself against the calumnies and reproaches of licentious and lying tongues, with the shield of patience and humility. Sometimes notwithstanding he replied to his accusers, lest his silence might become an occasion of scandal to the weak.

III. *Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a Man that shall die?* To day he is, and to morrow he is gone. Fear GOD, and thou wilt not be alarmed nor shrink at the terrors of Men. What confi-

^a 1 Cor. ix. 22. ^b 1 Cor. iv. 3. ^c Isai. li. 12.

derable prejudice can any one do thee by words, or injuries? He hurteth himself rather than thee: Neither shall he be able to escape the Judgment of GOD, whosoever he be. For thy part, have thou GOD always before thy eyes, and forbear all complaint and contention. And tho' at present thou art overborn by injustice, and sufferest that shame and confusion which thou hast not merited; yet let not this move thy indignation, nor cause thee to lessen thy Crown by impatience: But rather look up, to me in Heaven, who am able to deliver from all confusion, and wrong, and to render to every Man according to their works.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Of an absolute and entire Resignation of our selves, in order to obtain Liberty of Heart.

I. **S**ON, relinquish thy self: And thou shalt find me. Reserve no election, no choice of thy own; divest thy self of all propriety, all claim and title to thy self; give up thy understanding, thy will, thy affections to me, and thou shalt be continually

nually a gainer. For as soon as ever thou hast made a resignation of thy self, without revoking or resuming the gift, I shall pour down upon thee a greater abundance of my grace.

THE SOUL.

How often, Lord, must I resign my self, and in what particulars must I relinquish my self?

JESUS-CHRIST.

Always and at all hours; and in the smallest things as well as in the greatest. I except nothing, but expect to find thee stripped naked of all, without any reserves whatsoever. Otherwise, how canst thou be mine, and I thine; unless thou be entirely divested of all will of thy own, both within and without? The sooner thou executest this deed of gift, this conveyance of thyself, the better it will be for thee: And the more full and express, the more frank and sincere thou art in it; so much the more wilt thou please me, and so much the greater will thy own gain be.

II. Some indeed there are, who resign themselves, but not without some exception or limitation: For they do not fully trust in
GOD;

GOD; and for this reason they are solicitous to make provision for themselves. Some again offer up the whole at first, but afterwards when Temptation knocks at the door, they revoke the Grant, and return to themselves; and for this reason they make no considerable improvement in virtue. These shall not attain to the true liberty of the pure Heart, nor to the grace and divine sweets of my heavenly friendship and familiarity; unless they antecedently make a total resignation, and a daily Sacrifice and Oblation of themselves unto me; without which the Beatifick Union neither consisteth, nor can consist.

III. I have often said it, and now repeat it once more: Relinquish thy self, resign thy self, and thou shalt enjoy a profound rest and tranquillity of Heart. Give all in exchange for all: Call in nothing, re-demand nothing again of thy self: Abide purely, and confidently in me, and thou shalt have me. Thou shalt obtain liberty of Heart, and the Spirit of Darknes shall never be able to bring thee into bondage. Let this be thy whole endeavour, let this be thy Prayer, let this be thy desire, that thou mayst be enabled to strip thy self of all propriety, and in nakedness to follow naked *Jesus*: To die to thy
U self,

self, and to live eternally to me. Then shall all vain fantasies and imaginations, all worldly disquietudes, and superfluous unprofitable cares, vanish. Then also shall immoderate fear retire, and inordinate love shall die away.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Of keeping a good Government of our selves in our outward Affairs: And of Recourse to GOD in Dangers.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, thou oughtest carefully to aim at this, that in every place, and action, or outward occupation, thou mayst be inwardly free, and master of thy self; and that all things may be subject to thee, and not thou subject to them: That thou mayst be the absolute Lord and Governour of thy own actions; not a servant, or slave, but a true free-born *Israelite*, and a genuine son of *Abraham*; yea, translated into the inheritance and liberty of the Sons of GOD: Who stand upon present things, and take a view of the things of Eternity: Who

cast a glance only upon transitory things, and look directly upon heavenly: Whom temporal things draw not to cleave unto them, but are themselves rather drawn by them to serve excellent purposes, even as they were ordain'd by GOD, and intended by the Sovereign Work-master, who hath left nothing in his whole Creation irregular, or un-appointed to some worthy end.

II. Furthermore, if in every event thou dependest not upon outward appearance, or human prudence, nor viewest what thou seest, or hearest, with an eye of flesh; but immediately upon any difficulty enterest with *Moses* into the Tabernacle to seek GOD; thou shalt sometimes hear the Divine Oracle; and return greatly instructed both as to things present, and to come. For *Moses* had always recourse to the Tabernacle for the deciding of doubts and controversies; and made Prayer his weapon and refuge for the warding off dangers, and escaping the malice of enemies and wicked men. So oughtest thou in like manner to fly into the closet of thy heart, and earnestly to implore the direction and assistance of Divine Grace. For *Joshua*, and the Children of *Israel* are for this reason expressly laid to have been beguiled by the *Gibeonites*,

because *they asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord*^a; but giving too easy credit to smooth flattering speeches, were deluded by a pretended piety.

CHAP. XXXIX.

That a Man ought not to be too eager and earnest in the Management, nor over careful about the Success of his Affairs.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, commit thy cause evermore to me, I will give it a happy issue in due season. Wait my disposition, and thou shalt find the benefit thereof.

THE SOUL.

Lord, I most willingly commit all my concerns to thee; because my own thought and contrivance can avail little. I wish I troubled not my self about future contingencies, but did with all readiness submit them to thy good pleasure.

^a Josh. ix. 14.

JESUS-CHRIST.

II. Son, oftentimes a man pursues with great eagerness something which he hath set his heart upon; but when he hath obtained it, he begins to be of another mind; because mens affections do not continue long fix'd upon the same object, but drive them rather from one thing to another. It is therefore of no small consequence, for a man to forego his own inclinations, even in matters of no great importance.

III. True spiritual Proficiency consisteth in the renouncing of a man's self: And he that hath thus renounc'd, is arriv'd at a state of great freedom and security. Yet notwithstanding the Old Enemy, that profess'd Antagonist of all good men, never giveth over tempting; but night and day lays dangerous ambuscades, to ensnare (if possible) and undo the unwary Soul. *Watch and pray, saith the Lord, that ye enter not into temptation*^a.

^a Matth. xxvi.

CHAP. XL.

*That Man hath no good thing in himself,
nor any thing whereof to glory.*

THE SOUL.

I. **L**ORD, *what is man, that thou art
mindful of him : or the son of
man, that thou visitest him* ? What hath
man deserved, that thou shouldst shew him
the favour of thy countenance ? Lord, what
right have I to complain, if thou withdraw
thy presence, and leave me to my self ? Or
how can I expostulate with thee, if thou
grant not my petitions ? Assuredly, I may
in very truth think and say this : Lord, I
am nothing, I can do nothing, I have no
good thing in my self ; but am deficient in
all things, and evermore tend to vanity and
nothing. And unless I am succour'd by
thee, and inwardly instructed and fortify'd
by thy grace, I become immediately all
lukewarmness, all indevotion.

II. But thou, O Lord, art always the
very same, and remainest so for ever ; al-

▪ Pſal. viii. 4.

ways good, just, and holy; and accordingly doing all things well, justly, and holily, and disposing them for the best, after the counsel of thy divine will. But I, who am more prone to go backwards, than forwards, never continue in one stay: For I am light and inconstant, turned about with every blast of time, and chance, and passion. And yet thus weak and unstable as I am, no sooner shall it please thee to reach out unto me thy succouring hand, but my Soul shall find her self in a better state: Because thou alone without the aid of man art able to assist, and to confirm and establish me to such a degree, that my countenance shall be no longer subject to so many changes, but my heart be turned upon, and rest in thee alone.

III. Wherefore, if I could once perfectly abandon all human consolation, whether for the sake of obtaining devotion, or upon the account of some distress, which constrains me to have recourse to thee, because there is no man upon earth, that can comfort me; then might I reasonably hope for thy grace, and expect with joy the blessed gift of a new and heavenly consolation.

IV. Thanks unto thee, from whom the whole proceedeth, whensoever it goeth well

with me. For, as to my self, I am meer vanity and nothing before thee, an inconstant and weak man. Whereof then can I glory? Or what is it that I would be esteemed and admired for? For nothing? But this were unaccountably vain. Assuredly, vain-glory is a most destructive thing, and a huge vanity; because it intercepts true glory, and robs us of heavenly Grace. For whilst a man pleases himself, he displeases thee: Whilst he gapes after human praises, he deprives himself of solid virtues.

V. But this is the true glory, this the true spiritual rejoicing, to glory in thee, and not in himself: To rejoice in thy Name, and not in his own virtue; nor to take delight in any creature, but for love of thee. Praised be thy Name, not mine: Magnified be thy work, not my performance: Blessed be thy holy Name, but to my self let no part of the praises of men be attributed. Thou art my glory, thou the rejoicing of my heart: In thee I will glory, and rejoice all the day; but *of my self I will not glory, save only in my infirmities*^a.

VI. Let the Jews seek glory one of another^b: I will seek *that glory which com-*

^a 2 Cor. xii. 5.

^b John v. 44.

eth from GOD only. Verily all human glory, all temporal honour, all worldly grandeur, if put into the balance against thy eternal glory, is nothing but vanity and folly. O my Truth, my Mercy, my GOD, Holy and Blessed Trinity, to thee alone be praise, honour, power and glory ascribed, now, and from henceforth to all Eternity.

CHAP. XLI.

Of the Contempt of all Temporal Honour.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I SON, let it be no concern to thee, if thou seest others honoured, and advanced, and thy self despised, and debased. Lift up thy heart unto me in Heaven, and the contempt of men on earth will affect thee little.

THE SOUL.

Lord, we are miserably blind, and easily led away with vain thoughts. If I look well into my self, and consider what I am, I shall clearly discern, that whatsoever treatment I meet with, no wrong is done me;
and

and that I cannot therefore justly complain of thee, nor of any of thy creatures.

II. Contrariwise, because I have frequently, and grievously sinned against thee, all the creatures arm themselves deservedly, and make war against me. To me therefore confusion and contempt are justly due; but to thee praise, honour, and glory. And unless I prepare my self for this, to be contentedly despised and forsaken of all, and to be perfectly nothing in the esteem of men; I am in no condition to obtain a true and establish'd peace within, nor to be spiritually illuminated, nor fully and completely united unto thee.

CHAP. XLII.

That our Peace is not to be placed in Man.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, if thou place thy peace in any person, because of the agreeableness of his conversation, and the suitableness of his temper to thine, thou wilt find this an incumbrance, and be subject to instability, and disquietness of spirit. But if thou have
recourse

recourse to the ever-living, and abiding Truth, the withdrawing or death of a friend will be no great affliction to thee. The love of a friend ought to be founded in me: And it is for my sake that thou shouldst love those whom thou thinkest to be good men, and that are very dear to thee in this life. There is no friendship of any worth, or continuance without me: Nor is there any true, and pure love, but what I knit and join together. Thou oughtest to be so entirely dead to all personal fondnesses and affections, as to wish (for what concerns thy own particular) to be sequester'd from all human conversation. So much the nearer doth a man approach to God, by how much the farther he withdraws from all human comfort. So much the higher also doth he ascend towards God, by how much the lower he descendeth in himself, and the viler he is in his own eyes.

II. But he that ascribes any thing of good to himself, hinders the grace of God from coming into him; Because the grace of the Holy Spirit ever seeketh the humble heart. If thou couldst once perfectly annihilate thy self, that is, beat down and humble thy soul even to nothing, and empty thy self entirely of the love of all created things,
then

then should I come into thee, and flow in thy soul with abundant grace. When thou castest thy eye upon the creatures, thou lovest sight of the Creator. Learn to overcome thy self in all things, for the love of the Creator; so shalt thou be enabled to arrive at the knowledge of GOD. Tho' a thing be never so trifling and inconsiderable in its own nature, yet if it be unduly priz'd, and inordinately lov'd, it taints the soul, and checks it in its pursuit of Perfection, and of the chief and only Good.

CHAP. XLIII.

Against vain and secular Knowledge.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, be not captivated with the beauty and elegance of human discourses. *For the Kingdom of GOD is not in word, but in power*^a. Attend unto my words, which inflame the heart, and enlighten the understanding: Which provoke contrition, and infuse manifold consolation.

^a 1 Cor. iv. 20.

Let not the appearing wiser, or more learned, be the end thou proposhest in reading any Book. Study the mortification of thy vices and passions; for this will profit thee more than the understanding and resolution of all the controversies and nice questions bandied about by the Learned.

II. After thou hast read, and learnt many things, thou must return at last to one single Principle; even to this: I am he that teach man knowledge: And I give more light and understanding to babes, to the humble and simple, than all the men in the world are able to impart unto them. He, to whom I speak shall quickly become wise, and shall make great progress in the Spirit. Wo unto them who bestow their time and pains upon curious Sciences, and unprofitable speculations, and have little or no concern to inform themselves in their duty to me. A day will come when the Doctor of Doctors *Jesus Christ*, the King of Angels, shall appear to enquire into the studies, that is, to examin the consciences of all men. *And then shall Jerusalem be searched with candles^b, and the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light^c, and the*

^b Zeph. i. 12,

^c 1 Cor. iv. 5

tongues of the eloquent shall be mute, and all vain reasonings shall be confounded.

III. I am he who raise up the humble spirit in an instant, and render him more capable of receiving and comprehending eternal truths, than a course of many years study could have done. I teach without the noise of words, without the confusion of different opinions, without the vain ostentation of learning, without the heat of argumentation. I am he who teach men to despise earthly things, to nauseate present things, to seek eternal things, to favour and relish eternal things, to flee honours, to bear injuries and reproaches, to put their whole hope and trust in me, to desire nothing out of me, and to love me ardently, and above all things.

IV. For some disciples of mine, by an intimate and entire love of me, have been marvellously enlightened, and enabled to utter astonishing things. They have profited more by abandoning all things than they could have done by studying subtilties and nice points of doctrine. But I do not communicate my self in like manner and degree to all. To some I speak common matters only; others I instruct in things more abstruse and elevated. To some I appear

pear agreeably in shades and figures; to others I reveal in great light the most secret Mysteries. My Books speak alike to all, but they do not alike inform all; because it is I alone who teach inwardly; I who am the Truth; who search the heart; who understand the thoughts; who excite to good works; and who distribute to every one severally my gifts and graces in such kinds and proportions, as I my self judge meet.

CHAP. XLIV.*Of not engaging in Worldly Matters.*

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, in many things it is expedient for thee to be ignorant, and to look upon thy self as dead upon earth, and as one to whom all the world is crucify'd. It is expedient also to make thy self deaf to many things that are said: and to think rather of those things that make for thy peace. It is better to turn away thine eyes from things that displease thee, and to leave to every one their own sense, than to engage

gage in fierce contentions and hot disputes. If all stands well betwixt thee and thy God, and thou revere his Judgment, thou wilt easily bear to yield to, or to be cast by human Judgment.

THE SOUL.

II. O Lord, to what a pass are we come! Behold, a temporal loss is bitterly lamented, for an inconsiderable gain we toil and run, and think the day too short for our earnest pursuits; whilst the detriment done to the soul, all this while, is neglected and forgotten, and very late if ever, called to mind, and reflected upon. That which little or nothing profiteth, is carefully attended; and that which is most highly necessary, is negligently passed by: So totally abandoned to externals is poor man; and unless thy grace awake him suddenly to a better sense, so contentedly doth he lie and perish in exterior things.

CHAP. XLV.

*That Credit is not to be given to all Men:
And how prone Man is to offend in
Word.*

THE SOUL.

I. **L**ORD, be thou my help in trouble:
For vain is the help of Man.
How often have I fail'd of succour and faith-
fulness, where I thought I should find it?
And how often have I found it, where I
least expected it? Vain therefore and deceit-
ful is all trust in Man: But the Salvation
of the righteous is in thee, O GOD. Bles-
sed be thou, my Lord GOD, in all things
that befall us. We are weak and unstable,
easily deceiv'd, and turned about with eve-
ry wind.

II. What Man is there, that is able to
bear himself in all things with such prudent
care and exact circumspection, as not to be
betray'd, at one time or other, into some
trap, or perplexity? But he that putteth his
trust in thee, O Lord, and seeketh thee in
the simplicity of his heart, is less subject to
such slips and inconveniences. And tho'

he should fall into some tribulation; yea, tho' he should be involv'd in never so great difficulties, yet shall he be speedily delivered, or at least comforted, by thee: Because thou wilt never forsake him, that hopeth in thee even unto the end. A faithful friend, and such a one as will stand by us in all distresses, is hard to be found. Thou, Lord, thou alone art most faithful at all times, and in all circumstances, and there is none other like unto thee.

III. O how divinely wise was that holy Soul which said: *My heart is firmly established, and rooted and grounded in Christ.* Were this my case, human fears would not so easily disturb me, nor would the arrows of Men, the bitter words they shoot forth, move me. Who is sufficient to foresee, who to prevent all future evils? And, if the ills we are aware of, and provide against, yet oftentimes sensibly touch us, how can it be but that those that are unforeseen should grievously wound us? But why did I not provide better for my self, wretched Man that I am? Why also was I so easy in giving credit to others? But we are Men, yea, no better than frail Men, tho' many call and think us Angels. Whom can I believe, Lord? Whom, but thee? Thou art
Truth

Truth itself, incapable of deceiving, or of being deceiv'd. And again, *all Men are liars^b*, weak, unstable, and apt to falter, especially in their words; so that we ought not presently, and rashly to believe, what carries the appearance of Truth.

IV. With what wisdom hast thou forewarned us, that *we should beware of Men^c*: And, that *a Man's enemies, are those of his own household*: And, that *we ought not to believe, when Men say, lo Christ is here, or lo, he is there^d*! These Truths I have learnt at my own expence, and I wish they may rather serve to render me more cautious for the future, than to convince me of my past imprudence. Take care (says one) be sure you take care to keep this private which I tell you: And yet that very Man in the next company divulges what he had imparted just before under the seal of secrecy. From such unsincere ways, and indiscreet persons deliver me, O Lord, so the end I may not fall into their hands, nor ever be guilty of the like things my self. Put into my mouth the word of Truth and fidelity, and remove far from me a deceit-

^b Psal. cxvi. 10.

^c Matth. x. 17. 36.

^d xxiv. 23.

ful tongue. What I would not suffer from another, I cannot be too careful to avoid in my self.

V. O how good a thing is it, and what peace doth it bring, to be silent of others, and not to believe all things indifferently, nor lightly to take up and spread reports: To unbosom one's self to but few: Evermore to seek and to look up to thee, the judge and inspector of the heart: Not to be carried about with every wind of discourse, or idle report; but to desire that all things that pass both within and without us, may be order'd and accomplish'd according to the good pleasure of thy will! What a security, what a powerful preservative of the grace of Heaven is it, to fly the pomp and show of the world, and not to covet those things which seem to create esteem and admiration abroad; but to pursue with the utmost diligence whatsoever tends to amendment of life, and fervour of spirit.

VI. How many souls have been undone, by their virtue being known, and celebrated too soon? What a mighty advantage on the contrary, hath it been to others, that they kept their grace under an humble silence in this frail life, which is one continu'd Temptation and Warfare.

CHAP. XLVI.

Of putting our Trust in God, when we are attack'd with bitter Revilings, and Evil-speakings.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, stand fast, and hope in me. For what are words, but words? They fly through the air, but make no real impression. If thou art guilty; think with thy self, that thou shouldst be glad of this occasion to amend. If thy conscience reproach thee of nothing; consider that thou oughtest to suffer this injurious treatment chearfully for the sake of God. How will that man be able to endure wounds and blows, who is not yet a match for words? And what can be the reason that such trifles go so near thee, but because thou art as yet carnal, and regardest men more than is meet? For, because thou art afraid of contempt, therefore thou art unwilling to be reprov'd for thy miscarriages, and art ever seeking colours and excuses for them.

II. But look into thy self more narrowly, and thou wilt confess, that the world, and

a vain desire of pleasing Men, still liveth in thee. For whilst thou darest to be buffeted and put to shame and confusion for thy faults, it is a plain sign that thou art neither a true humble man, nor really dead to the world, nor the world crucified to thee. But give ear to my word, and thou wilt not value ten thousand words of mortal men. Behold, tho' all things were said against thee, that the utmost malice could possibly devise; what hurt could they do thee, if thou sufferedst them to pass, without taking any more notice of them than of a straw or mote that flies in the air? Could they all together pull off so much as one hair of thy head?

III. But he that enters not into himself, that suffers his heart to wander abroad, and hath not God before his eyes, is easily moved with the least word of dispraise. But the man that confideth in me, and affects not to depend upon his own judgment and sense of things, shall be delivered from the fear and dread of Men. For I am the Judge, and the discerners of all secrets: I know in what manner, and with what intention the thing was done; I know both the person that offer'd, and the person that suffer'd the injury. That word of reproach came forth
from

from me; it happen'd by my permission; *that by this means the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed*^a. I shall judge the guilty and the innocent, but it was my good pleasure to try both before-hand by a secret and hidden judgment.

IV. The testimony of Men oftentimes deceiveth: My judgment is true; it shall stand, and shall not be overthrown. It lyeth hid generally, and few can penetrate it as to particulars; but yet it never erreth, neither can it err, although to the eyes of the foolish it may not seem right. Thou oughtest therefore to have recourse to me in all sorts of human judgment, and not to lean to thy own private determinations and decisions. For the righteous shall not be confounded, whatever befalls him from the hand of God. Tho' a thing be alledged unjustly against him, he will not matter it much: Nor on the other hand is he lifted up with vain joy, if others justify him, and clear his innocence by a reasonable defence. For he considers that *I am a searcher of the very heart and reins*^b, and judge not as Man judges, according to outward and fallible appearances. For that is often found

^a Luke ii. 35.

^b Psal. vii. 10.

blameable in my eyes, which in the judgment of Men is thought commendable.

THE SOUL.

V. Lord GOD, thou *righteous Judge, strong and patient*^c, who understandest the frailty and depravity of man, be thou my strength, and my whole trust; for my own conscience is not assurance sufficient for me. Thou knowest, what I know not; and therefore in all reproofs and reproaches I ought to humble my self, and to bear them meekly. Forgive me also in mercy, as often as I have failed herein, and grant me a larger measure of the grace of sufferance for the time to come. For thy abundant mercy will avail me more for the obtaining of pardon, than my own conceiv'd righteousness for my justification as to those sins which are unknown to my self, and escape the reflection even of my own conscience. For though *I should know nothing by my self, yet am I not hereby justified*^d; because setting aside thy mercy, *no man living shall be justified in thy sight*^e.

^c Psal. vii. 12.

^d 1 Cor. iv. 4.

^e Psal. cxliii. 2.

CHAP. XLVII.

*That all Tribulations and Hardships:
whatsoever are willingly and chear-
fully to be undergone for Eternal Life.*

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, let not any labours undertaken for my sake damp thy courage, neither let tribulations deject thee over-much, but let my promise in all events strengthen and comfort thee. I am sufficient to render a recompence beyond all degrees of measure and proportion. Thou shalt not labour here long, nor shalt thou be always oppress'd with pain and grief. Wait a little, and thou shalt see a speedy end of thy miseries. An hour will come, when all turmoil and tumult shall cease. Short and tolerable is every thing which passeth away with time.

II. Proceed in thy course with resolution; Labour faithfully in my Vineyard, *I my self will be thy reward.* Write, read, sing, lament, meditate, pray, sustain adversities manfully: Eternal Life is worthy of all these, and greater conflicts. A peace will
come

come in a certain day, which is known unto the Lord; and at that time there shall be neither day nor night, but an uninterrupted light, an everlasting brightness, a firm peace, and a secure repose. Thou shalt not say then: *Who shall deliver me from this body of death?* Nor cry: *Woe is me, that my pilgrimage is prolonged;* for *Death shall be swallowed up, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption;* sorrow and anguish shall be no more, but joy and bliss for ever, in the sweet and lovely society of Saints and Angels.

III. O, if thou hadst once seen the everlasting Crowns of the Blessed in Heaven, and with what triumphant glory they even now rejoice, whom once the world despised, and thought not worthy so much as to live upon the earth; verily thou wouldst immediately humble thy self to the very dust, and covet rather to be under the feet of all, than to command and be above one single person: Neither wouldst thou desire to pass thy days here in joy and prosperity, but rather rejoice to suffer affliction for God; and esteem it thy greatest gain to be reputed as nothing amongst men.

IV. O, if thou hadst a relish of these things, and that they sunk deep into thy heart,

heart, how durst thou so much as once to complain! Ought not all pains and travels, all sufferings and tribulations chearfully to be undergone for Eternal Life? It is no trifle, the losing or gaining the Kingdom of God. Lift up thy face therefore unto Heaven. Behold I, and all my Saints with me, who had sharp conflicts in this world, do now rejoice, are now comforted, are now secure, now are at rest, and shall abide with me in the Kingdom of my Father, world without end.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Of the Day of Eternity, and Miseries of this present Life.

I. **O** Most blessed Mansion of the City above! O most bright and glorious Day of Eternity; which night obscurereth not, but the Sovereign Truth ever enlighteneth; a day always joyous, always secure, and never changing into a contrary state! O that that day had dawn'd, and that all these temporal things had receiv'd a period! It shines to the Blessed indeed with direct

rect and undiminish'd splendors, but at a distance only, and as it were through a glass, to the Sojourners upon earth.

II. The Citizens of Heaven know how pleasant and joyful a day that is; but the banished children of *Eve* bewail the bitterness and tediousness of this. The days of this life are short, and evil, full of sorrow and anguish: Where a man is defiled with so many sins, encumber'd with so many passions, oppress'd with so many fears, rack'd with so many cares, distracted with so many curiosities, entangled with so many vanities, compass'd about with so many errors, worn out with so many labours, vex'd with temptations, weaken'd with pleasures, and tormented with necessities and wants.

III. O, when shall there be an end of all these evils! When shall I be delivered from the miserable bondage of sin! When shall I make mention, O Lord, of thee alone! When shall I fully rejoice in thee: When shall I be in a state of true liberty, without any clog or restraint, without any uneasiness whatsoever of mind, or body! When shall I enjoy a solid peace, a secure and not to be disturb'd peace, a peace within, and without, a peace on every side, and in every respect firm and assured! Sweetest Saviour, when shall I
stand

stand to gaze upon thee! When shall I contemplate the glory of thy Kingdom! When wilt thou be unto me all in all! O, when shall I be in thy Kingdom, which thou hast prepared for thy Beloved Ones, before the foundation of the world? I am left poor and desolate, a stranger and an exul in an Enemy's countrey, where there are daily wars, and the forest distresses.

IV. Comfort my banishment, assuage my pain; since thee I gasp after with the whole desire of my Soul. For it is all grief and bitterness, whatsoever this world offereth for my consolation. I long to have an intimate enjoyment of thee, but am not able to lay hold of thee. Fain would I grasp and cling to heavenly things, but things temporal, and unmortify'd passions, depress and fasten me down. With my mind I would mount above all things, but by the flesh I am constrained, sorely against my will, to grovel upon earth. Thus am I, wretched man, engaged in a perpetual war, and am become a burden unto my self, whilst the spirit tendeth upwards, and the flesh beareth downwards.

V. O, what do I inwardly suffer, when in the midst of my Meditations and Prayers, a crowd of carnal imaginations obtrude themselves

themselves upon me! *My GOD, go not far from me, neither cast away thy servant in displeasure^a. Cast forth thy lightning, and scatter them: Shoot out thine arrows^b, and disperse all the illusions and suggestions of the Enemy.* Gather in my thoughts, call home my senses unto thee: Cause me to forget all worldly things: Grant me to cast away immediately with disdain and scorn all vicious fancies, and foul imaginations. Succour me, O thou Truth Eternal, and root me fast, that no blast of vanity may shake and unsettle me. Come into my heart, O Sweetness Celestial, and let all impurity flee before thee. Pardon me also, and in mercy forgive my infirmity, whensoever in prayer I think of any other thing besides thee. For there, I must confess, my distractions are great and frequent; and many times I am least of all in that place where I stand or kneel: But I am rather there, whither my thoughts carry me. Where my thoughts are, there properly am I; and my thoughts are mostly there, where the thing is that I love. What nature or custom hath render'd delightful and pleasing, that to be sure is most familiar, and readily offereth it self unto me.

^a Psal. xxvii. 10.^b cxliv. 6.

VI. Whence thou, that art Truth it self, hast expressly said: *For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also*^c. If I love Heaven, I take pleasure in thinking of heavenly things. If I love the world, I feel a joy in the prosperities of the world, and am as much afflicted for the adversities thereof. If I love the flesh, the things of the flesh frequently occur to my imagination. If I love the spirit, I delight to think of spiritual things. For what things soever I have an affection for, the same I love to hear of, and to talk of, and carry home with me the images and impressions of them. But blessed is that man, who for thy sake, O Lord, giveth a bill of divorce to all created things: Who offereth violence to nature, and crucifieth the lusts of the flesh through the fervour of the spirit; so that his conscience being calm'd and quieted, he may be in a state to offer unto thee pure Prayers; and be meet to be mingled with the Choirs of Angels, after having discarded all earthly things that may give him any disturbance either from within or without.

^c Matth. vi. 21.

CHAP. XLIX.

Of the Desire of Eternal Life: And what great good things are promised to those that strive.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. SON, when thou perceivest a desire of Eternal Bliss to be infused into thee from above, and longest to be released from the prison of the body, to the end thou mayst be able to enjoy a full uninterrupted view of my unclouded brightness; open thy heart wide, and receive, with all greediness, this heavenly inspiration. Render thy humblest and heartiest thanks to the sovereign Goodness, which dealeth with thee so condescendingly, visiteth thee so graciously, exciteth thee so ardently, lifteth thee up so powerfully, lest by thy own weight thou sink down to earthly things. For thou receivest not this blessing, from any consideration or endeavour of thy own, but by the pure vouchsafement of supernal grace, and divine indulgence; to the end thou mayst profit in the virtues, and encrease in humility, and prepare thy self for future combats, and study
to

to cleave to me with the whole affection of thy heart, and to serve me with fervency of spirit.

II. Son, the fire burneth many times, but the flame ascendeth not without smoke. Thus also the desires of many burn strong to heavenly things, and yet they are not absolutely free from the temptation of sensual affection. And therefore it is not solely and purely for the glory of GOD, that they are so instant with him in their requests. Such also are thy desires oftentimes, which thou pressest with so much ardor and importunity, and wherein thou pretendest so much sincerity. For that is not pure and perfect, which is tinctured with selfish and by-regards.

III. Ask not what is delightful, and profitable to thy self, but what is acceptable to me, and tending to my glory: For if thou judgest aright, thou must prefer and follow my Ordination before both thy own desire, and all things that are desirable. *I know all thy desire, and thy frequent groanings are not hid from me^a.* Thou wouldst this instant be admitted into the glorious liberty of the Sons of GOD: Thou hast a de-

^a Psal. xxxviii. 9.

fire and longing to enter already into the everlasting Courts, and the heavenly Country replenished with all joy; but that hour is not yet come, but must be preceded by a far different time, even a time of war, a time of labour, and probation. Thou longest to be fulfill'd with the sovereign Good: But thou canst not attain to this as yet. It is I that am the sovereign Good: Wait for me, (saith the Lord) wait till the Kingdom of God come.

IV. Thou art yet to be proved upon earth, and to be exercised in many things. Consolation shall sometimes be given thee, but fulness of satisfaction be denied thee. Be strong therefore, and courageous as well in performing, as in suffering things contrary to flesh and blood. Thou must *put on the new Man*^b, and be changed into a quite different person. Thou must often do what thou wouldst not; and forbear, what thou wouldst. Others shall succeed in their pursuits; thou shalt not. What others say, shall be hearkened unto: What thou sayst, shall be reckoned as nothing. Others shall ask, and receive; thou shalt ask, and shalt not obtain.

^b Ephes. iv. 24.

V. Others shall be great in fame and general esteem; but thou shalt not be so much as mentioned. Others shall be entrusted with this or that employ; but thou shalt be thought a creature perfectly useless and fit for nothing. At this Nature will sometimes grieve, and it will be a point gained, if thou bear it with silence. In these, and many the like mortifications, a faithful servant of his Lord is wont to be tried, how he hath learnt to deny himself, and to break his own will in all things. There is scarce any thing, wherein it is of equal advantage to thee to be mortify'd, as in this; *viz.* To be obliged to see and to suffer things which are contrary to thy own will; but especially when things odd and absurd, and to thy thinking of little or no use, are commanded thee. And because thou darest not resist a higher Power, being placed under Authority; therefore it seemeth hard to thee to walk at the beck of another, and to renounce altogether thy own private sentiment.

VI. But consider, Son, the fruit of these hardships, the shortness of their continuance, and the exceeding greatness of the reward that awaits them; and they will be so far from being grievous to thee, that they will

prove a marvellous strengthening and refreshing of thy patience. For in recompence of that short violence, which thou voluntarily offerest to thy own will now, thou shalt enjoy thy will for ever in Heaven. For there thou shalt find whatsoever thou willest: Whatsoever thou canst possibly desire. There thou shalt have the full enjoyment of all good, without the fear of losing any part thereof. There thy will being always one with mine shall covet nothing out of me, nothing private or particular. There thou shalt meet with no resistance, no complaints against thee, no contradictions, no obstacles: But all the things thou wishest shall be present at once, and shall content the whole desire of thy heart, and fill it even to the brim. There will I render glory, for ignominy patiently born; *the garment of praise, for the spirit of heaviness*^c, for the lowermost seat, an everlasting Throne. There the fruit of obedience shall appear, the labour of penance be turned into joy, and humble subjection be exalted to a Crown of glory.

VII. Now, therefore, humble thy self under the hand of all: Nor trouble thy head who it is that bids or orders this or that.

^c Isa. li. 3.

But make it thy principal care, to take all in good part, and to perform and accomplish with a hearty good will whatsoever is enjoin'd, or even hinted to thee, whether by thy superior, thy inferior, or equal. Let one man seek this, and another that; let him glory in this thing, the other in that, and let them be prais'd and extoll'd by millions of tongues: For thy part, do thou neither glory in one thing, nor another, but place thy whole satisfaction in the contempt of thy self, and in my good pleasure and honour alone. This ought to be thy wish, that whether by life, or death, GOD may be always glorify'd in thee.

CHAP. L.

How a Desolate and afflicted Person ought to resign himself into the Hands of GOD.

I. **L**ORD GOD, Holy Father, blessed be thou now and for ever; because as thou willest, so is it done; and what thou dost, is good. Let thy servant rejoice in thee, not in himself, nor in any other: Because thou alone art the true joy: Thou art my hope, and my Crown: Thou art
Y 3 my

my rejoicing, and my glory, O Lord. What hath thy servant, but what he hath received from thee, and that without any merit of his? Thine are all things whatsoever thou hast given and whatsoever thou hast made. *I am poor and in misery, even from my youth up*^a; and sometimes my soul is sorrowful, even unto tears: Sometimes also it torments and disquiets it self with the apprehension of threatening evils.

II. I long for the joy of peace, I earnestly crave the peace of thy Children, who are fed by thee in the light of consolation. If thou give peace, if thou infuse holy joy, the soul of thy servant shall be filled with gladness, and devoutly overflow in thy praises. But if thou turn away thy face, as thou art often wont, he shall not be able *to run the way of thy commandments*^b; but rather he boweth his knees, and in the anguish of his soul beateth his breast, because it is not with him, as it was yesterday, and the day before, *when thy lamp shined upon his head*^c, and *under the shadow of thy wings* he was *hid*^d, and protected from the assaults of temptations.

III. O righteous Father, and ever to be

^a Psal. lxxxviii. 17.

^b Psal. cxix.

^c Job. xxix. 3.

^d Psal. xvii. 8.

praised, the hour is come for thy servant to be tried. Dearest Father, meet it is, that in this hour thy servant suffer something for thy sake. O evermore adorable Father, the hour is come, which from all Eternity thou foreknewest would come; wherein it is expedient for thy servant to be afflicted and mortify'd for a short space in the outward Man, being nevertheless always alive with thee in the inner Man. Let him be despised a-while, let him be humbled, and be abased before men, let him be bruised and broken with sufferings and infirmities; that he may rise again with thee in the Morning of a new day, and be glorify'd in Heaven. Holy Father, so hast thou ordained, and so will'd; and this is come to pass, which thou thy self hadst appointed.

IV. For this is a demonstration of thy peculiar grace and favour to thy friend, to let him suffer, and be in tribulation in the world, for the love of thee, how often, and by what hand soever thou permittest it to fall upon him. Without thy counsel and Providence, and without a reason, nothing is done upon earth. *It is good for me, O Lord, that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes^e, and dis-*

^e Psal. cxix 71.

card all proud elevations of heart, and presumptuous confidences. Profitable it is for me, that *shame hath covered my face*^f, that I may have recourse to thee, rather than to men, for comfort. I have learnt also from hence, to tremble at thy unfearchable Judgments; who afflictest the just together with the righteous, but not without equity and justice.

V. I render thanks unto thee, for that thou hast been nothing sparing of thy afflictions, but hast furrowed my flesh with bitter scourgings, inflicting pains, and pursuing me with distresses and anguishes within and without. There is nothing can comfort me of all things under Heaven, but thou my Lord God, the heavenly Physician of souls: Who *woundest, and healest; bringest down to the grave, and raisest up again*. Let thy chastisement be upon me; and *thy very rod shall teach me wisdom*^g.

VI. Behold, dearest Father, I am in thy hands, under the rod of thy correction I bow my self: Smite my back and my neck, set right my crooked, perverse will, and bring it to an absolute conformity to thine.

^f Psal. lxi. 7. ^g Psal. xviii 35.

Make me a devout and humble Disciple, according as thou art wont, and knowest right well how to do; to the end I may walk obedient to every beck of thy divine pleasure. I submit my self, and all that is mine, to thy correction: Better is it to be chastised here, than hereafter. Thou knowest all things in general, and every thing in particular, and nothing is hid from thee in the conscience of man. Thou knowest the things that will be, before they come to pass; and needest not that any should inform, or admonish thee of what is done upon earth. Thou knowest what is expedient for my advancement in holiness, and how exceeding serviceable tribulation is, to scour off the rust of vice. Fulfil in me thy whole good pleasure, and despise me not for my sinful life, to none better, nor more clearly known, than to thee alone.

VII. Grant me, O Lord, to know what ought to be known; to love what ought to be loved; to praise what is most pleasing to thee; to value that which appears precious unto thee; and to despise that which is vile in thy sight. Suffer me not to judge according to the sight of the outward eyes, nor to give sentence according to the hearing of the ears of ignorant men; but to discern

cern both of visible, and spiritual things with a true judgment, and above all things, ever to search after thy good will and pleasure.

VIII. Men, who form their judgments upon sense, are often deceived; the lovers of the world also are often deceived, in loving only visible things. How is a man one whit the better, for being greatly esteemed by another man? When one man exalts another, the cheat imposes upon the cheat; the vain puffs up the vain; the blind misleads the blind; the weak supports the weak, and in reality rather shames, and brings reproach upon him, by his empty undeserved commendations. For *how much every one is in thy eyes, so much is he, and no more, saith humble St. Francis.*

CHAP. LI.

That we should apply our selves to meaner and lower Exercises, when we are indisposed for, and not able to raise our selves to those that are more exalted.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, it is not possible for thee to persevere always in a state of extraordinary fervour, and zeal for virtue; nor to maintain thy self in a high pitch of Contemplation for a constancy: But thou wilt be obliged sometimes, by reason of original Corruption, to stoop to inferior things; and to bear, with reluctancy and pain, the load of this corruptible Life. As long as thou carriest a mortal body, thy spirit will feel it self aggriev'd and oppress'd with a tiresome weight. Wherefore whilst thou art in the Flesh, thou oughtest frequently to groan under the load thereof; for this reason because thou art hinder'd thereby from cleaving incessantly to spiritual exercises, and divine contemplation.

II. At such times it is expedient for thee to have recourse to low and exterior works,
and

and to seek recreation in good actions, and bodily exercises: To expect with an assur'd confidence, my return and heavenly Visitation: Patiently to endure thy own Banishment, and the dry and barren state of thy soul, till thou art again visited by me, and deliver'd from all thy anxiety and disquietude of spirit. For I will cause thee to forget thy pains, and to enjoy an inward repose and tranquillity. I will lay open before thee the spacious Plains of Scripture, that *with an enlarg'd heart* thou mayst begin to *run the way of my commandments*^a. And thou shalt say: *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*^b.

^a Psal. cxix. 5.

^b Rom. viii. 18.

CHAP. LII.

*That a Man ought not to esteem himself
worthy of Consolation, but rather of
Correction.*

THE SOUL.

I. **L**ORD, I am not worthy of thy consolation, nor of any spiritual Visitation: And therefore thou dealest righteously with me, when thou leavest me poor, and desolate. For could I shed a Sea of tears, yet should I not be worthy of thy consolation: Yea, rather stripes and chastisement only are my just due; because I have grievously, and often offended thee, and in many things greatly transgressed. Wherefore all things duly consider'd, I deserve not so much as the least consolation. But thou, a gracious, and merciful GOD, who wouldest not that the works of thine hands should perish, *to make known the riches of thy goodness to the vessels of mercy*^a, notwithstanding all his unworthiness, vouchsafest to comfort thy servant in a manner infinitely passing that of men. For thy consolations are not like human confabulations.

^a Rom ix. 23.

II. What have I done, Lord, that thou shouldst bestow any heavenly consolation upon me? I can recollect no good that I have done, but that I have been ever prone to sin, and slow and backward to amendment. True this is, and I cannot deny it. Should I say otherwise, thou wouldst stand up against me, and there would be none to defend me. What have I deserved for my sins, but Hell and everlasting Flames? I confess with great truth, that I am worthy of all scorn and contempt; nor is it fit that I should be number'd or named among the devout ones. And tho' it be grievous to me to hear, yet because it is true, I will freely confess my sins against my self, to the end I may more easily obtain thy mercy.

III. What shall I say, guilty as I am, and full of all confusion? I have not the confidence to utter any thing more than this one word: I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned: Have mercy on me; forgive me. *Let me alone a little, that I may bewail my misery, before I go to the land of darkness, a land black with the terrors of the shadow of death*^b. What dost thou so strictly require, what other reparation dost thou,

^b Job x. 20, 21.

canst thou expect of a guilty and miserable Sinner, but that he be broken with contrition, and humble himself for his manifold sins and provocations? In true contrition, and humiliation of heart, hope of forgiveness springeth up: There the troubled conscience is recompos'd, the loss of grace retriev'd, Man shielded from the wrath to come, and GOD, and the penitent Soul meet one another in a holy kiss.

IV. The humble contrition of a Sinner is a Sacrifice acceptable to thee, O Lord, and of a far sweeter odour in thy presence, than that of Incense. This is also that grateful Ointment, which thou wert for having pour'd upon thy sacred feet^c: Because *a broken and contrite heart is what thou hast never despised*^d. There is our Sanctuary, and place of refuge from the face and fury of the Enemy. There is it that all the stains and blemishes, all the defilements of flesh and spirit, howsoever contracted, are cleans'd and wash'd away.

^c Luke vii. 37.

^d Psal. v. 17.

CHAP. LIII.

*That the Grace of GOD is inconsistent
with Worldly-mindedness; or with a
Relish of Earthly Things.*

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, my Grace is precious; and suffers not it self to mix with external things, nor with earthly consolations. Thou oughtest therefore to cast away all the hindrances of Grace, if thou desire to receive the influences thereof. Enter thy closet; love to live alone by thy self; seek the converse of none; pour forth thy devout Prayers to GOD for compunction of heart, and purity of conscience. Esteem the whole world as nothing: Prefer the call of GOD before all outward things. For thou canst not attend upon me, and delight in transitory things at once. Thou oughtest to sequester thy self from thy acquaintance and dearest friends, and to wean thy mind from all temporal consolations. Thus the blessed Apostle St. *Peter* beseeches the faithful in *Christ*, to use the good things of this world

world with moderation, *as strangers and pilgrims*^a.

II. O what a mighty assurance will that man have upon a death-bed, whom no affection to any earthly thing ties to the world! But the sickly weak soul is not yet capable of understanding what it is to have a heart thus divorc'd from all outward things, nor does the Sensual man know the liberty of the Internal man. Notwithstanding if he would be truly spiritual, it is necessary for him to renounce every thing that touches him, whether in a higher or lower degree, and to guard against no one more, than himself. When thou hast once perfectly overcome thy self, other things will be of more easy conquest. A compleat victory *indeed*, is that of triumphing over one's self. For he that hath himself in perfect subjection, in such sort that his sensual appetite is obedient to reason, and his reason in all things obedient to me, this man is truly a conqueror of himself, and master of the world.

III. If thou art ambitious to climb to this pitch of Perfection, thou must set out manfully, and lay the ax to the root of the

^a 1 Pet. ii. 11.

tree, in order to pull up and destroy all inordinate inclination towards thy self, and towards any other private and worldly good, that lurketh in thee. From this bitter root, the irregular love of a Man's self, springeth the whole in a manner of whatsoever is necessary to be utterly overcome. And when the stock is kill'd, and entirely cut away, a profound peace and tranquillity will immediately ensue. But because few labour perfectly to die unto themselves, and do not go fully out of themselves, therefore they remain hamper'd and intangled in themselves, and are not able to soar in the spirit above themselves. But the Man that desires to walk in an absolute freedom with me, must necessarily mortify all his evil and disorderly affections, and fondly cleave to no created thing, through any private or selfish love.

CHAP. LIV.

Of the different Motions of Nature and Grace.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, mark carefully the Motions of Nature and Grace, because they move in a very opposite and subtle manner; and are scarce distinguishable, unless by a spiritual Man, and one greatly illuminated from within. All Men indeed desire good, and something of this is pretended in all their words and actions; but many are deceiv'd by false appearances of good. Nature is crafty; she allures, entraps and deceives many, and evermore proposes the gratifying her self for the End of all her actions: But Grace walketh in simplicity, and avoideth every thing that hath the appearance of evil: Hath no design to deceive, and doth all things purely for the sake of GOD, in whom also she rests, as in her supreme and only End.

II. Nature is unwilling to die to her self, cannot endure to be kept under, nor to be master'd, hates subjection and obedience:

But Grace studies mortification and self-denial, resists sensuality, desires to be subdued, chuses to be subject, and is not for making use even of the liberty she hath: Loves to be kept under discipline, and affects not to have command over any body, but is always desirous *to walk humbly with her God*; and *for the sake of God*, is ready *to submit humbly unto every ordinance of Man*^a. Nature labours for her own advantage, and computes what gain may arise to her from another: But Grace considers not what may be profitable and convenient for her self, but rather what may be of service to the publick. Nature gladly receives honour and reverence: But Grace faithfully ascribes all honour and glory unto God.

III. Nature dreads ignominy and contempt: But Grace rejoices to suffer reproach for the Name of *Jesus*. Nature loves idleness and bodily rest: But Grace cannot bear to be unemploy'd, and chearfully embraces labour and toil. Nature covets to have things curious and fine; and abhors those that are mean and vulgar: But Grace delighteth in plain and humble things, disdaineth not that which is rough to the flesh,

^a 1 Pet. ii. 13.

nor is ashamed to be seen in an old and ragged coat. Nature regardeth temporal things, rejoiceth in earthly gains, is deeply affected with losses, is provoked with every slight reproachful word: But Grace looks at the things that are eternal, cleaveth not to those that are temporal, nor is disturb'd with losses, nor exasperated with hard words: Because she hath laid up her treasure and her joy in Heaven, where nothing perisheth.

IV. Nature is covetous, and had rather receive than give, is selfish, and seeketh her own: Grace is kind and bountiful to all, abhorreth all narrowness and contracteness of spirit, is content with a little, and esteemeth it *more blessed to give than to receive*^b. Nature enclineth to the creatures, to fleshly delights, and to vagaries and idle diversions: But Grace fixeth the heart upon God and goodness; renounceth the creatures, fleeth the world, hateth the desires of the flesh, restraineth roving and rambling abroad, and is ever averse to appear in publick. Nature would gladly have some outward comfort, wherein to be sensibly delighted: But grace seeketh to be comforted in God alone, and to be delighted in the Supreme Good above all visible things.

^b Acts xx. 35.

V. Nature doth all for interest, and for her own particular advantage; can do nothing *gratis*, or for nought, but for the kindnesse she doth, expects either an equal return, or a better, or at least some applause, or favour: And covets to have her own works and gifts highly esteemed: But Grace seeketh nothing temporal, nor expecteth any other reward than GOD alone for her recompence: And desireth no more of temporal necessities, than what may serve her for the obtaining of things eternal.

VI. Nature delighteth in a multitude of friends and relations, glorieth in height of station, and nobleness of Blood: Carefeth the powerful, fawneth upon the rich, applaudeth those that are like herself. But Grace both loveth her enemies, and is not exalted with the multitude of her friends; she nothing values either place or birth, unless accompanied with more eminent degrees of virtue: She favoureth the poor rather than the rich, sympathizes with the innocent more than with the powerful, applauds the sincere, not the deceitful: Is evermore exhorting the good to aspire after higher gifts and excellencies, and to conform themselves to the Son of GOD, by the brightness and exemplariness of their virtues.

virtues. Nature complains soon of hard and uneasy circumstances: Grace bears want and poverty with patience and constancy.

VII. Nature bows and warps all things to her self, strives and disputes for her self: But Grace refers all things to GOD, from whence they originally flow: She ascribes nothing of good to her self, neither doth she arrogantly presume: She contendeth not, nor preferreth her own opinion before that of others: But in every apprehension and notion, submits her own reason to eternal Wisdom, and to the Judgment of GOD. Nature affects to know hidden mysteries, and to hear things that are new. She loves to appear in publick, and to be convinced of every thing by the experiment of her outward senses: She desires to be known, and to do such things as will bring her in praise and admiration: But Grace is not at all concerned to know new things, nor to understand curious matters; because all this springs from that old root of corruption; there being nothing new nor durable under the Sun. She teacheth therefore to restrain the senses, to shun vain-pleasing and ostentation, humbly to hide those things that are worthy of praise, and truly admirable,

and from every thing, and in all knowledge, to seek nothing but the fruit of edification, and the praise and honour of GOD. She is not desirous that her self, or any thing belonging to her should be publicly praised, but wishes GOD may be bless'd in his gifts, who of meer love and bounty freely giveth all things.

VIII. This Grace is a supernatural light, and a certain special gift of GOD, and the peculiar distinguishing mark of the Elect, and an earnest of everlasting Salvation: Which raiseth up a Man from earthly to heavenly things, and of carnal maketh him spiritual. Wherefore by how much the more Nature is crush'd and subdued, so much the larger supplies of Grace are poured in, and the inner Man is daily, by new visitations, reformed and created again according to the image of GOD.

CHAP. LV.

Of the Corruption of Nature, and the Efficacy of Divine Grace.

THE SOUL.

I. **O** Lord my GOD, who hast created me after thy own image and likeness, grant me this Grace which thou hast shewn to be so important, and so necessary to Salvation; to the end I may overcome my own depraved Nature, drawing to sin and to perdition. For I feel in my flesh a *Law of sin warring against the Law of my mind, and leading me captive*; to the obeying of sensuality in many things: Nor am I able to resist the passions thereof, unless thy most holy Grace, by its ardent effusions in my heart, be assisting to me.

II. I have need of thy Grace, and a large measure of it too, to vanquish Nature, which is continually prone to evil, even from her youth up. For by the offence of the first man *Adam*, Nature having fallen, and being corrupted by sin, the punishment of this

^a Rom. vii. 23.

stain descended upon all men; insomuch as the very word *Nature*, which by thee was created good and upright, is now taken for the corruption and weakness of Nature; because the motion thereof being left to it self, draweth to sin, and to inferior and earthly things. For the small strength that remained, is like a spark covered with embers; and it is that which we call Natural Reason, encompassed about with great darkness, yet still retaining power to distinguish good and evil, truth and falsehood; tho' she be unable to fulfil all that she approveth, and enjoyeth not the full light of truth, nor a perfect health and soundness in her affections.

III. Hence is it, O my GOD, that *I delight in thy law after the inward man*^b, being convinced that thy *Commandment is good, just, and holy*, condemning also all evil, and warning me against sin. Yet still *with the flesh I serve the law of sin*, whilst I rather obey sensuality than reason. Hence is it, that *to will good is present with me, but how to perform it I find not*. Hence I often purpose many good things, but for want of Grace to help my infirmity, upon a slight resistance I start back and fail.

^b Rom. vii.

Hence it happens, that I know the way of Perfection, and discern clearly enough what I ought to do: But being press'd down by the weight of my own corruption, I rise not to higher degrees of holiness and virtue.

IV. O how exceeding necessary is thy Grace for me, O Lord, to begin a good work, to carry it on, and to accomplish it! For without it I can do nothing; but I can do all things in thee, Grace strengthening me. O Grace truly divine, without which no merits are available, no gifts of Nature are of any worth or significance! Arts, riches, beauty, strength, wit, eloquence, are of no account with thee, O Lord, without Grace. For the gifts of Nature are common to good and bad alike: But the peculiar gift of the Elect is Grace, or Love; and they that bear this honourable mark are esteemed worthy of eternal Life. This Grace is so eminent, that neither the gift of Prophecy, nor the working of Miracles, nor any speculation, how high soever, is of any esteem without it. Nay, neither Faith, nor Hope, nor any other virtues are acceptable unto thee, without Charity and Grace.

V. O most blessed Grace! 'Tis thou, who makest the poor in spirit, rich in virtues; and rendrest the rich in virtue and
good

good works, humble in heart. Come, Heavenly Gift, descend and enter into me, replenish me early with thy consolation, lest my soul faint for weariness and dryness of heart. I humbly beg, O Lord, that I may find Grace in thy sight: For thy Grace is sufficient for me, tho' other things, that Nature desireth, be wanting. Tho' tempted and vex'd with many tribulations, I shall fear no evil, so long as thy Grace is with me. That alone is my strength, that furnishes counsel and aid. It is mightier than all enemies, and wiser than all the wise.

VI. It is the teacher of truth, the mistress of discipline, the light of the heart, the solace of affliction, the dispeller of melancholy, the banisher of fear, the nurse of devotion, the parent of tears. What am I without this, but a dry log, and an unprofitable trunk, fit for nothing but to be cast into the fire? Let thy Grace therefore, O Lord, always prevent and follow me, and make me continually to be given to all good works, through *Jesus Christ* thy Son.

Amen.

A Prayer

A Prayer for the Gifts of God's Holy Spirit. By Dean HICKES.

“ **O** Lord my God, who by thy Son
“ our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, hast
“ promised thy holy Spirit to them who ask
“ him of thee; I beseech thee to give him
“ to me in all the graces and assistances of
“ which I stand in need. I ask him in all
“ humility and earnestness, as the greatest
“ blessing I can receive; I ask him in the
“ sense of my own weakness and infirmi-
“ ties, as knowing without his continual in-
“ spirations I can desire nothing that is good,
“ nor do any thing that is acceptable to
“ thee: O therefore let him be with me,
“ and remain with me, and most power-
“ fully assist and support me in all trials and
“ temptations when I most need his help.

“ Let him be unto me a Spirit of sancti-
“ fication to purify my corrupt nature, a
“ Spirit of counsel in all difficulties, of di-
“ rection in all doubts, of courage in all
“ dangers, of constancy in all persecutions,
“ of comfort in all troubles, especially in
“ times of sickness, and at the hour of death,
“ and of submission and resignation to thy
“ holy

“ holy will and pleasure in all afflictions
“ that are most grievous to flesh and blood.

“ Leave me not a moment to my own
“ human frailty without his assistance ; but
“ let him constantly inspire me with fear,
“ love and devotion towards thee ; with
“ truth, justice, and charity towards my
“ neighbour ; and with abstinence and sobriety towards my self. And because I
“ live in evil times, and am in danger of being deceived by the wiles and false pretensions of Men, let him be also unto me
“ a Spirit of wisdom, and conduct, and discretion, that in all my conversations I may
“ be able to discern truth from hypocrisy,
“ and sincere, undesigning and faithful, from
“ false, designing, and flattering friends.

“ Furthermore I beseech thee, let him be
“ unto me a Spirit of patience under all crosses, and in all provocations ; a Spirit
“ of trust and stedfast repose of mind in thy
“ care and providence ; a Spirit of humility to make me quiet and easie in my
“ self, meek and gentle to others, and to
“ free me from all the sin and torment of
“ pride, envy and ambition : And finally so
“ let him guide me and govern me through
“ the whole course of my short life here, that
“ I may

“ I may not fail to obtain everlasting Life,
“ through *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

CHAP. LVI.

*That we ought to renounce our selves, and
to imitate Christ, in taking up our Cross.*

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, so much as thou art able to go
out of thy self, so much wilt thou
be enabled to enter into, and abide in me.
Like as to desire nothing outwardly, causeth
internal Peace; so to relinquish himself in-
wardly, uniteth the Soul unto GOD. I
would have thee learn a perfect renuncia-
tion of thy self in my will, without con-
tradiction and complaint. Follow me: *I
am the way, the truth, and the life*.*
Without a way, there is no walking; with-
out truth, there is no knowing, without life,
there is no living. I am the Way thou
oughtest to follow; the Truth thou ought-
est to believe; the Life thou oughtest to
hope for. I am the Way that cannot mis-

* John xiv. 6.

lead; the Truth that cannot err; the Life that cannot end. I am the straightest Way; the supreme Truth; the true Life, the blessed Life, the Life uncreate. If thou continue in my Way, *thou shalt know the truth, and the truth shall make thee free*^b, and thou shalt lay hold of eternal Life.

II. *If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments*^c. If thou wouldst know the truth, believe my words. If thou wouldst be perfect, sell all thou hast. If thou wouldst be my Disciple, deny thy self. If thou wouldst inherit a blessed Life, despise the present Life. If thou wouldst be exalted in Heaven, abase thy self upon Earth. If thou wouldst reign with me, carry the Cross with me. For the servants of the Cross alone find the way of Bliss, and of the true Light.

THE SOUL.

III. Lord *Jesus*, seeing thy Life was a mortified Life, and to the world contemptible, grant me the grace to imitate thee in being willing to suffer worldly contempt. For *the servant is not greater than his lord, nor the disciple above his master*^d. Let thy servant be exercised in thy Life, because

^b John viii. 32.

^c Matth. xix. 17.

^d Matth. x. 24.
therein

therein doth my Salvation, and true Holiness consist. Whatsoever I read, or hear out of that, gives me no refreshment, no true delight.

JESUS-CHRIST.

IV. Son, *since thou knowest these things, and hast read them all; happy art thou, if thou do them^c. He that bath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: And I will love him, and will manifest my self unto him^f: And will make him to sit down with me in the Kingdom of my Father^g.*

THE SOUL.

Lord *Jesus*, as thou hast said, and promised, even so be it, and grant me to see the accomplishment thereof. I have received, I have received the Cross from thy hand; and as thou hast laid it upon me, I will bear it with constancy even unto death. Verily the life of a true Recluse, is a Cross, and leads to Paradise. I have engaged, go back I cannot; nor is it by any means fit that I should repent of my holy resolution.

^c John xiii. 17.

^f John xiv. 21.

^g Apoc. iii. 21.

V. Courage, my Brethren, let us proceed together; *Jesus* will be with us: For *Jesus* sake we received this Cross: For *Jesus* sake let us persevere in the Cross. He will be our helper, who is our guide, and forerunner. Behold, our King marches before us, who will fight for us. Let us follow manfully; let none be afraid of terrors: Let us be prepared to die gallantly in the Field; and not stain our honour, by flying from the Cross.

CHAP. LVII.

That a Man should not be too much dejected, when he makes Slips, or is guilty of some Failures.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, humility and patience in adversity are more pleasing to me, than much consolation and devotion in prosperity. Why art thou disquieted upon the account of some slight fault that is alledg'd against thee? Had it been a greater matter, thou oughtest not to be much disturbed at it. But now let it pass: This is nothing new: It is not the first disparagement

ment of this kind, nor is it like to be the last, if thou live long. Thou art courageous enough, as long as nothing happens cross to thee: Thou givest good counsel also, and canst strengthen others with thy advice: But when an unexpected tribulation comes home to thy own door, thou failest in counsel, and strength. Mark thy own extreme frailty, which thou hast frequent experience of in slight accidents: It is notwithstanding intended for thy good, when those and the like rencounters happen unto thee.

II. Banish it out of thy thoughts, the best thou canst; and if it hath touched thee, let it not deject thee however, nor hang long upon thee: Bear it patiently at least, if thou canst not joyfully. Tho' it be pain to thee to hear it, and thou feel indignation rising up within thee, yet check it forthwith, and suffer not any passionate indecent expression to come out of thy mouth, which may give offence to thy weaker brethren. For the storm that is raised shall soon be laid again, and thy inward grief shall be sweetened by the return of Grace. *As I live, saith the Lord, I am ready to assist thee, and to give thee more than ordinary consolation; if thou put thy trust in me, and devoutly call upon me.*

III. Be more patient, and arm thy self for greater sufferings. Imagine not that all is lost, because thou findest thy self often afflicted, and violently tempted. Thou art Man, and not GOD: Thou art Flesh, and not an Angel. How shouldst thou be able to persevere always in the same state of virtue, when this was wanting to an Angel in Heaven, and to the first Man in Paradise? I am he who graciously raise up those that mourn, and promote such as are sensible of their own weakness, to a participation of my Divinity.

THE SOUL.

IV. Lord, blessed be thy word, *Sweet above Honey, and the Honey-comb unto my mouth.* What could I do amidst so many tribulations and anguishes, didst not thou fortifie my Spirit with thy holy sayings? So long as I arrive at last at the Haven of Salvation, what matter is it, what or how much I suffer? Grant me a good End; grant me a happy passage out of this world. Be mindful of me, O my GOD, and conduct me the directest way into thy Kingdom. *Amen.*

CHAP. LVIII.

Against prying into high Myſteries, and examining the ſecret Judgments of God.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. SON, beware of diſputing about high Matters, and about the ſecret Judgments of God: Why one Man is ſo forſaken, and another ſo highly favoured of God: Why this perſon alſo is ſo much afflicted, and that ſo remarkably exalted. Thoſe are things beyond the utmoſt reach of human underſtanding: Nor is any reaſon, or diſputation ſufficient to ſearch out the divine counſels. When the Enemy therefore ſuggelteth theſe things unto thee, or ſome curious people inquire the reaſon of them, answer that of the Prophet: *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and juſt are thy Judgments^a*. And that: *The Judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether^b*. My Judgments are to be feared, not to be diſcuſſed; becauſe they are incomprehenſible to the underſtanding of Man.

^a Pſal. cxix. 137.

^b Pſal. xix. 9

II. Forbear also inquiring, or disputing of the merits of the Saints, which of them is holier than another, or which is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Such questions oftentimes ingender strife, and unprofitable contentions; they also cherish pride, and vain glory: From whence spring envies and dissensions, whilst one, in the pride of his own heart, contends for the preference of this Saint; another, for the pre-eminence of that. But to desire to know, and to enquire after such things, turns to no good account, but rather displeases the Saints: *Because I am not a God of dissension, but of peace^c*; which peace consisteth more in true humility, than in self-exaltation.

III. Some Men are carried away with a greater zeal of love and affection for one Saint than for another: But such affection hath more in it of Man, than of God. It is I who created all the Saints: I gave them grace: I conferred upon them glory. I knew the merits of each one in particular: *I prevented them with the blessings of my goodness^d*. I foreknew my Beloved Ones before time was; *I chose them out of the*

^c 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

^d Psal. xxi. 3.

world; they chose not me^c. I called them through grace, I drew them with the cords of mercy: I conducted them safe through various and sundry temptations. I infused into their hearts glorious consolations: I gave them perseverance: I crowned their patience.

IV. I know both the first, and the last: I embrace them all with an inestimable love. I am to be praised in all my Saints: I am to be blessed above all things, and to be honoured in all of them, whom I have thus gloriously exalted, and predestin'd, without any antecedent merits of their own. *He therefore that despiseth one of the least of my Saints, honoureth not even the greatest^f: For I have made the small and the great^g.* And he that derogates from any of the Saints, derogates from me also, and from all the rest in the Kingdom of Heaven. There all are united into one through the bond of charity, they have the same sentiment, the same will, and all love one another with an entire unalterable affection, being knit together in the unity of him who is all in all.

V. Nay farther, (which is a far more exalted degree of charity) they love me more

^c John xv. 16, 19 ^f Matth. viii. 10. ^g Wis. vi. 7.

than themselves, and their own merits. For being ravished above themselves, and carried beyond all self-affection, they pass wholly into the love of me, in the fruition whereof they rest with an unspeakable complacency and joy flowing from it. Nothing can possibly divert, or damp their affection; because being filled, to their utmost capacity, with the everlasting Truth, they burn with the fire of an inextinguishable charity. Let therefore carnal and sensual Men keep silence, and forbear to dispute concerning the state of the Saints; Such as have no notions higher than private joys and separate satisfactions. They take away, and add according to their own inclinations, not as is pleasing to the eternal Truth.

VI. In many it is ignorance, especially in such who being but slenderly enlightened rarely attain to love any one with an affection purely spiritual. They are also strongly inclined by a natural fondness, and human partiality, to one rather than to another: and as they find themselves disposed and affected as to inferior and earthly objects, the same do they imagine of heavenly ones. But there is the greatest distance imaginable between the thoughts of such Novices, and that sublime knowledge which
inlight.

inlightened minds receive from divine revelation.

VII. Beware therefore, my Son, of being curious in those matters which are above thy capacity: But let this rather be thy care, and constant endeavour, how thou mayst be found tho' it be but the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. And supposing any one did know, who were holier than others, or greater in the Kingdom of Heaven, what would this knowledge avail him, unless upon this discovery he humbled himself the more before me, and were excited thereby to a greater ardency in praising my Name? The Man, who seriously reflects upon the greatness of his own sins, and the inconsiderableness of his own virtues, and at what a wide distance he is removed from the Perfection of the Saints, doth a thing much more acceptable and well-pleasing in the sight of GOD; than he that disputes about the greatness or littleness of those Saints. ^b It is better for Men to implore with tears and fervent prayers the grace of GOD to enable them to imitate their holy lives, than to pry into their secrets by a vain curiosity.

^b The Original runs thus: *It is better to supplicate the Saints with Tears and fervent Prayers and to implore their glorious Intercessions with an humble Heart.*

VIII. As for them, they are well, perfectly well contented, if Men knew but how to be contented, and to restrain their vain discourses. They glory not of their own merits, as those who ascribe nothing of good to themselves, but the whole of what they have and are, to me; because I of my infinite liberality and love gave them all things. They are fulfilled with so passionate a love of the Godhead, and with such an exuberant, overflowing joy, that no glory, no happiness is, or can possibly be wanting unto them. All the Saints, the higher they are in glory, so much the more humble they are in themselves, and the nearer and dearer unto me. And therefore thou findest it written, that *they cast their crowns at the feet of GOD, and fell upon their faces before the Lamb, and adored him that liveth for ever and ever*ⁱ.

IX. Many inquire who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, that know not whether they themselves shall be thought worthy to be numbred amongst the least. It is a great thing to be even the least in Heaven, where all are great; because all there shall be called, and shall indeed be, the Sons

ⁱ Rev. iv.

of GOD. *A little one shall become a thousand; and the sinner of an hundred years shall die^k.* For when the disciples enquired, who should be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, they were answered in this wise: *Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little Child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven^l.*

X. Woe unto them who disdain to humble themselves freely with little Children; because the low gate of the Kingdom of Heaven will not give them entrance: *Woe also unto the rich, who have their consolations in this world^m;* for whilst the poor enter into the Kingdom of GOD, they shall stand weeping and wailing without. Rejoice ye humble, and leap for joy, ye that are poor; *for yours is the Kingdom of GODⁿ;* provided only ye walk in the Truth.

^k Isa. lx 22 lxv. 20. ^l Matth. xviii. 3, 4.

^m Luke vi. 24. ⁿ Matt. v. 3.

CHAP. LIX.

*That all our Hope and Confidence is to be
fixt in GOD alone.*

THE SOUL.

I. **L**ORD, what is my Hope in this life?
Or what is my greatest comfort, of
all the things under Heaven? Is it not thou,
my Lord GOD, whose mercies are infinite?
Where hath it been well with me, without
thee? Or when could it be ill with me, when
thou wert present? I had rather be poor for
thy sake, than rich without thee. I would
chuse rather to be a Pilgrim upon earth with
thee, than to possess Heaven without thee.
Where thou art, there is Heaven; and there
death and Hell, where thou art not. Thou
art the longing desire of my soul; and there-
fore my sighs and groans, my cries and pray-
ers must needs be continually directed to
thee. There is none, in fine, that I can ful-
ly trust in, none that can seasonably help
me in my necessities, but thou alone my
GOD. Thou art my Hope, and my trust;
thou my comfort, and most faithful friend
upon all occasions.

II. All

II. All seek themselves, and their own interest: Thou intendest my Salvation and Proficiency alone, and convertest all things into good to me. Tho' I be exposed to various temptations, and adversities, all this thou orderest for my advantage, who art wont to prove thy Beloved Ones a thousand ways. In which tryal and probation, thou oughtest to be no less lov'd and bless'd, than if thou hadst filled me with heavenly consolations.

III. In thee therefore, O Lord God, I place my whole hope and refuge; In thee I deposit all my tribulation and anguish; because I find all weak and unstable, whatsoever I behold out of thee. For a multitude of friends will not avail, nor will mighty aids be able to succour, nor prudent counsellors to give wholesome advice, nor the Books of the Learned to comfort, nor any precious substance to deliver, nor any secret and delightful place to secure; unless thou thy self stand by, help, fortifie, comfort, instruct and guard.

IV. For all the things, that seemingly tend to peace and felicity, are nothing in thy absence, and do, in truth, contribute no felicity. Thou therefore art the ultimate perfection of all good, the height of life, and the

the depth of wisdom: And to hope in thee above all things, is the strongest consolation of thy servants. To thee are my eyes lifted up, in thee I trust, O my God, thou Father of mercies. Bless and sanctify my soul with heavenly benediction, to the end it may become thy heavenly habitation, and the seat of thy eternal glory; and that nothing may be found in the Temple of thy Excellence, which may offend the eyes of thy Majesty. According to the greatness of thy goodness, and the multitude of thy mercies, look upon me, and hear the prayer of thy poor servant, banished far in the region of the shadow of death. Protect and keep the soul of thy vassal, amidst the numerous perils of a corruptible life, and thy grace accompanying him, direct him in the way of peace to a country of everlasting brightness. *Amen*, so be it.

The End of the Third Book.

OF THE
IMITATION
OF
CHRIST.

BOOK IV.
Of the SACRAMENT of the ALTAR.

*A Devout Exhortation to the Holy
Communion.*

The VOICE of CHRIST.



COME unto me, all ye that tra-
vel, and are heavy laden,
and I will refresh you, saith
the Lord, Matth. xi. 28.

“ The
2

*" The Bread that I will give, is my
" Flesh, which I will give for the Life
" of the World, John vi. 51.*

*" Take, eat, this is my Body, which is
" given for you; this do in remembrance
" of me, 1 Cor. xi. 24.*

*" He that eateth my Flesh, and drink-
" eth my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in
" him, John vi. 56.*

*" The words which I speak unto you,
" they are Spirit, and they are Life, John
" vi. 63.*

CHAP. I.

With how great Reverence Christ is to be received.

The VOICE of the DISCIPLE.

I. **T**HESE are thy words, O Christ, thou Truth Eternal, tho' not spoken at one and the same time, nor written in the self-same place. Seeing therefore they are thine, and consequently most true, they ought all to be received by me with a heart full of gratitude and faith. They are thine, for thou didst utter them; and they are mine also, because thou didst deliver them for my Salvation. Gladly do I receive them from thy mouth, to the end they may be the deeper ingrafted in my heart. Words so gracious, so full of sweetness and love, do encourage me: But my own transgressions deter me; and my impure conscience strikes me back, and keeps me from approaching so grand a Mystery. The sweetness of thy words attracts me, but the multitude of my sins loads and retards me.

II. Thou commandest me to come unto thee with Faith, if I would have part with

thee; and to receive the Food of Immortality, if I desire to obtain everlasting life and glory. *Come*, sayst thou, *unto me all ye that travel and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.* O sweet and ravishing Word in the ear of a sinner! By which thou, my Lord and my God, invitest an indigent starved wretch, to the Participation of thy most holy Body. But who am I, O Lord, that I should presume to approach thee? Behold the Heaven, and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee, and yet thou sayst, *Come ye all unto me.*

III. What meaneth this most gracious vouchsafement, and so loving invitation? How shall I dare to come, who am conscious to my self of no good whereupon to presume? How shall I bring thee into my house, who have so often offended thy most gracious countenance? The Angels, and Archangels reverence thee, thy Saints and holy ones fear before thee; and sayst thou, *Come ye all unto me?* Unless thou Lord hadst said it, who could have believ'd it to be true? And unless thou hadst commanded it, who durst attempt an approach? Behold, the righteous *Noah* laboured a hundred years in making an Ark, for the saving himself and a few souls: And how can I in one hour's

hour's space prepare my self to receive with due reverence the Maker of the Universe?

IV. Thy glorious Servant, and peculiar Friend *Moses*, framed an Ark of incorruptible wood, and overlaid it with the purest gold, to be a Repository for the Tables of the Law: And shall I, a corruptible rotten trunk, so lightly take upon me to receive the Maker of that Law, and Giver of Life? *Solomon*, the wisest of the Kings of *Israel*, spent seven years in building a magnificent Temple to the honour of thy Name: He allotted eight days for celebrating the Feast of Dedication: He sacrificed a thousand Peace-Offerings: And solemnly conducted the Ark of the Covenant with sound of trumpet, and great joy, into the place appointed to receive it. And can I wretched creature, and poorest of mortals, can I think of bringing thee into my house, who hardly know how to employ one half hour devoutly? Nay, would to GOD I could but once employ worthily, tho' it were even less than half an hour!

V. O my GOD, how much did those Saints endeavour to please thee! And all that I do, alas! how poor, how incredible is it! How little time do I bestow to prepare my soul to Communicate! Seldom

wholly collected within my self, very seldom free from all distraction. And yet surely in the salutary presence of thy Deity, no unbecoming thought should offer it self, nor even any created thing engage me; seeing it is not an Angel, but the Lord of Angels, that I am about to entertain.

VI. Yet is there a very great difference between the Ark of the Covenant with its Reliques, and thy most pure Body, with its ineffable Virtues: Between those legal Sacrifices, that were types and figures of things to come, and the true Sacrifice of thy own Body, the completion of all the ancient Sacrifices. Why therefore am I not enflamed with a more ardent desire of thy venerable Presence? Why do I not prepare my self with greater care and diligence to receive thy holy Mysteries: Seeing those ancient holy Patriarchs and Prophets, yea Kings also and Princes, with all the People, express'd such a mighty passion of devotion towards the worship of God?

VII. The most devout King *David* danced before the Ark of God with all his might, commemorating the Benefits indulg'd in times past to his Forefathers: He made instruments of sundry kinds, he published Psalms, and appointed them to be sung

sung with joy: He also oftentimes sung himself to the Harp, being inspired with the Grace of the Holy Ghost: He taught the People of *Israel* to praise God with their whole heart, and with harmonious voice every day to bless and exalt him. If so much devotion was then used, if there was such a remembrance of the Benefits, such a celebration of the Praises of God before the Ark of the Testament; what degree of reverence and devotion ought I, and all Christian People to have, in the presence of the Sacrament, even in the reception of the Super-excellent Body of *Jesus Christ*?

VIII. Many run to divers places, to visit the Reliques of the Saints: And are astonished when they hear a recital of their actions; they view with admiration the noble structures, and magnificence of their Churches, and kiss their sacred bones wrapped in silk and gold. And behold, thou art present here before me upon the Altar, my God, the Holy of Holies, the Creator of Men, and Lord of Angels! Oftentimes curiosity and a desire of novelty has a part in such sights; and Men carry away with them but small fruit of amendment; especially when they run up and down thus from place to place without true contrition. But here, in

the Sacrament of the Altar, thou art ^a present, O my *Jesus*, whole, perfect and entire, even very GOD and very Man. Where also are reaped the abundant fruits of eternal Salvation, as often soever as thou art worthily and devoutly received: And it is no levity that draws us hither, no curiosity, no sensuality: But a firm Faith, a devout Hope, and a sincere Charity.

IX. O GOD, thou invisible Creator of the World, how wonderful are thy dispensations towards us! How sweet, how gracious are thy dispositions with regard to thy chosen ones, to whom thou offerest in the Sacrament a communication of thy very self! For this passeth all Understanding: This in an especial manner ravisheth the hearts of the devout, and inflameth their affections. For thy truly Faithful Servants, who make it the endeavour of their whole life to grow better and better, receive very often from this most precious Sacrament a plentiful degree of the Grace of Devotion, and love of Virtue.

^a See Hooker of the Sacrament at the end of the first Vol. of Collection of Devotions for the Altar.

X. O the marvellous, and hidden Grace of the Sacrament! which only *Christ's* Faithful Ones know; but the unbelieving, and such as serve Sin, can have no experience of. In this Sacrament spiritual Grace is convey'd, and loss of strength in the soul is repaired; and her beauty, disfigur'd by sin, returns again. So exceeding great sometimes is this Grace, that from the abundance of Devotion conferr'd, not only the soul, but even the feeble body feels an increase of strength added unto it.

XI. Yet, is it a most lamentable and deplorable thing to consider our lukewarmness and cold neglect, and that we are not carried with a more vehement affection to receive *Christ*; in whom the whole hope and merit of our Salvation consists. For he is our Sanctification, and Redemption; He the consolation of our Pilgrimage, and the fruition of the Saints to all Eternity. It is therefore hugely to be lamented, that many so little consider this salutary Mystery, which creates joy in Heaven, and by its virtue preserves the whole World in being. O the blindness and hardness of Man's heart, to have no more regard to so ineffable a gift, and by the frequent and daily use thereof, to come to so wretched a pass,

as to be unconcerned and indifferent about it!

XII. For if this most holy Sacrament were administer'd in one only Place, and consecrated by one only Priest in the whole World; with what desire, think ye, with what longing Souls would men be carried to that Place, and to such Priest of God, that they might^b partake of the holy Mysteries? But now there are many Priests, and in many places is *Christ* offered up: Infomuch as the Grace and Love of God to Man is apparently so much the greater, by how much the Holy Communion is more widely spread and diffused throughout the World. "Thanks be to thee, sweet
 " *Jesus*, Shepherd Eternal, for condescending to refresh us poor Exiles with thy
 " precious Body and Blood: And to invite
 " us to receive these Mysteries, even with
 " the comfortable words of thine own
 " Mouth", saying: *Come unto me all ye that travel, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.*

^b In the Latin; *That they might see the Divine Mysteries celebrated.*

CHAP. II.

*Of the great Goodness and Love of
God exhibited to Man in the Sacra-
ment.*

The VOICE of the DISCIPLE.

I IN confidence of thy Goodness, and
great Mercy, O Lord, I approach
sick and diseased to the Physician of Souls;
hungry and thirsty to the Fountain of Life;
poor and needy to the King of Heaven; a
servant to his Lord; a creature to his Crea-
tor; a desolate disconsolate wretch to my
tender and compassionate Comforter. But
whence is this to me, that thou shouldst
come unto me? Who am I, that thou shouldst
communicate to me thy own self? How
dares a sinner appear before thee? Or how
canst thou condescend to come to a sinner?
Thou knowest thy servant, and understand-
est well that he hath nothing in him that is
good, nothing to invite thee to do him this
Grace. Wherefore I confess my own vile-
ness, I acknowledge thy goodness, I extol
thy mercy, and give thanks to thee for thy
marvellous love. For thou dost this for thy
own

own sake, not for any merits of mine: To the end thy goodness may be made more known unto me, thy love more abundantly shewed, and thy condescension more eminently set forth. Since therefore this is thy pleasure, and thou hast commanded that it should be so, this thy vouchsafement is pleasing to me also; and O that my own iniquity may be no obstacle herein!

II. O most sweet and bounteous Saviour, what reverence and thankfulness, together with perpetual praise, is due unto thee for the Participation of thy sacred Body; the worthiness and excellence whereof no tongue of man is able to set forth! But what thought, what meditation shall fill my breast in this Communion, in this approach to my Lord, whom I cannot worthily adore, yet desire devoutly to receive? What better thought, what more profitable meditation, than to humble my self perfectly before thee, and to exalt thy infinite goodness towards me? I praise thee, O my GOD, and exalt thee eternally. I despise my self, and lay my soul low before thee, in the deepest sense of my own vileness and unworthiness.

III. Behold, thou art the Holy of Holies, and I the impurest of Sinners. Behold, thou stoopest to me, who am not worthy to lift up

up my eyes unto thee. Behold, thou comest to me, thou desirest to be with me, thou invitest me to thy Banquet, thou art pleased to give me heavenly Food, even the Bread of Angels to eat: No other verily, than thy own self, the Living Bread, that camest down from Heaven, and givest Life to the world.

IV. Oh! Whence could such Love proceed? What an amazing condescension is this! What thanks, what praise is due unto thee for them! O how saving, and beneficial was thy design, in instituting and ordaining this Mystery! How sweet and delightful the Banquet, when thou gavest thy self for Food! O how wonderful are thy Operations, O Lord! How mighty thy Power! How unspeakable thy Truth! For thou spakest, and all things were created: And this was done, which thou commandedst.

V. It is indeed a thing wonderful, and worthy to be believ'd, and passing all human Understanding; that thou, O my Lord God, very God and very Man, shouldest be contained whole, perfect and entire under the elements of Bread and Wine, and enter into, and abide in, all worthy Receivers. Thou, the great Lord of universal Nature, who standest in need of none, even thou art pleased

pleased to inhabit in us by thy Sacrament. O then preserve my heart and body free from all pollution; that with a joyful and pure Conscience I may be able often to celebrate thy Mysteries, and to receive the same to my everlasting Salvation; which thou didst establish and institute principally for thy own glory, and for a perpetual remembrance of thee throughout all ages.

VI. Rejoice, O my Soul, and give thanks unto GOD for so noble a gift, so singular a consolation left unto thee in this vale of tears. For as often as thou revolvest this Mystery in thy thoughts, and receivest the Body of *Christ*; so often dost thou act over the work of thy Redemption, and art made partaker of all the merits of *Christ*. For the love of *Christ* can never be diminished, and the treasures of his Propitiation can never be exhausted. And therefore thou oughtest to prepare thy self hereunto with fresh devotion, and a disposition of heart ever new, and to weigh the grand Mystery of Salvation, with a deep attention and profound consideration. It ought to appear to thee as wonderful, as new, and as delightful, when thou Communicatest, as if in

In the Latin; When thou celebratest, or hearest Mass.

that

that very instant *Christ* first descended into the Virgin's Womb, and was made Man; or hanging upon the Cross were suffering and expiring for the Salvation of Men.

CHAP. III.

*The Benefit of Frequent Communion.**The VOICE of the DISCIPLE.*

I. **B**Ehold, I come unto thee, O Lord, to receive the Blessing of thy Gift, and to be made glad in thy holy Banquet, which thou, O GOD, in thy abundant goodness hast prepared for the poor. Behold, in thee is all whatsoever I can, whatsoever I ought to desire; thou art my Salvation and Redemption, my Hope and Strength, my Honour and Glory. Quicken therefore this day and rejoice the Soul of thy servant, for unto thee, Lord *Jesus*, do I lift up my Soul. I desire to receive thee now with devotion and reverence: I long to bring thee home to my house, to the end that with *Zaccheus*, I may obtain a Blessing from thee, and be number'd among the sons of *Abraham*.

II. My

II. My Soul thirsteth for thy Body, my heart hath a desire and longing to be made one with thee. Give me thy self, and it sufficeth. For besides thee, no consolation availeth any thing. Without thee I cannot be, and without thy visitation I am not able to subsist. And therefore it behoveth me to approach unto, and to receive thee frequently, in order to derive from thee fresh supplies of health and strength; lest haply I faint by the way, if I be deprived of that heavenly sustenance. For so thou, O most compassionate *Jesu*, as thou wert preaching to the multitudes, and curing sundry diseases, heretofore saidst: *I will not send them away to their houses fasting, lest they faint in the way*^a. Deal thou therefore in like manner now with thy servant, thou who hast left thy self in the Sacrament for the consolation of the Faithful. For thou art the sweet repast of the Soul, and he that receiveth thee worthily, shall be a partaker and inheritor of Eternal Glory. It is necessary for me, I am sure, who so often fall and sin, grow dull and faint so soon; that by frequent prayers and confessions, and often receiving of thy sacred Body, I should

^a Matth. xv. 32.

renew, cleanse and inflame my affections; lest perchance by too long abstaining, I fall off from my holy purposes.

III. For the imaginations of Man are prone unto evil from his youth up, and unless a remedy from above come in to his succour, he falls from bad to worse. The Holy Communion therefore checks and calls him back from evil, and fortifies and strengthens him in good. For if at present I often find my self so slack and lukewarm, notwithstanding I communicate; what would become of me; if I did not apply this remedy, and sought not after so powerful a help? And although I am not every day fit, nor rightly prepared to communicate; yet I will endeavour at least at proper seasons to receive the divine Mysteries, and to make my self partaker of so mighty a Grace: For this doubtless is the principal, and almost only consolation of the Faithful Soul, during her state of Pilgrimage and absence from thee in this mortal body, to be often thus remembring her GOD, and to receive her Well-beloved into a heart inflamed with love and devotion.

IV. O the amazing condescension of thy compassions towards us! That thou, Lord GOD, the Creator, and Quickner of the
Spirits

there in this mortal body to be after this

Well-boloxed into a heart infused with

IV. O the amazing contradiction of this

compositions towards us. That there is a

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CHAP. IV.

That many Benefits are reached out, and made good to the Devout Communicant.

The VOICE of the DISCIPLE.

I. **M**Y Lord and my GOD, prevent thy servant with the blessings and graces of thy good Spirit, to the end I may be enabled to approach thy august and glorious Sacrament, with such degrees of worthiness and devotion as thou wilt accept. Stir up my heart towards thee, and deliver me from this spiritual Lethargy, that hath seiz'd me. Visit me with thy Salvation, to the end I may taste in spirit thy sweetness, the fulness whereof lieth hid in this Sacrament, as in its source and spring. Enlighten my eyes also, that I may be able to contemplate and look into this grand Mystery: And strengthen me to believe it with a firm unshaken Faith. For it is the operation of an Almighty GOD, not the act of finite feeble Man: It is thy sacred Institution, not Man's invention: For no Man is of himself able to comprehend and fathom these

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things,

things, which surpass the refined Understanding even of an Angel. How then should I, an unworthy sinner, vile dust and ashes, be able to discover and understand any thing of so profound a holy secret?

II. Lord, with singleness of heart, with an honest undoubting Faith, and by thy own command, I approach unto thee with hope and reverence: And verily believe that thou art present here in the Sacrament, God and Man. It is thy good pleasure then, that I should receive thee, and unite my self unto thee in love. Wherefore I implore thy Mercy, and crave thy special Grace, to this end, that my whole Soul may dissolve in thee, and run all over with Love, and never entertain more any external, any human consolation. For this most sublime, this most august Sacrament is the health of Soul and Body, the medicine of all spiritual maladies: Wherein my vices are cured, my passions curbed, temptations overcome, or weaken'd, greater degrees of Grace infused, imperfect Virtue augmented, Faith confirmed, Hope strengthen'd, and Charity inflamed and dilated.

III. For thou hast dispensed, and still often dost dispense in the Sacrament many benefits to thy Beloved Ones devoutly Communicating, O my God, the cherisher
and

and sustainer of my Soul, the repairer of human infirmity, and the giver of all inward consolation. For thou infusest into them much consolation against their sundry tribulations, and liftest them up from the depth of their self-abasement to a hope of thy protection, and revivest them inwardly, and dispellest their clouds by enlightning their hearts with unusual beams of thy chearing and most comfortable Spirit: Insomuch as they, who before Communicating were full of anxiety and disquietude, and found themselves under great barrenness of spirit, and want of devotion, as soon as they were refreshed with this Celestial Banquet, have felt in themselves a great alteration for the better. And in such a way of dispensation thou dealest with thine Elect; to this end, that they may truly acknowledge, and plainly and experimentally find, how exceeding weak and feeble they are of themselves, and how abundantly good and gracious thou art unto them. For of themselves they are cold, dead and indevout: But from thee they receive zeal, alacrity, and warmth of devotion. For who that humbly approaches the Fountain of Sweetness, can fail of carrying away from thence some moderate degree at least of Sweetness? Or who

can stand near a great fire, and not receive some small heat thereby? And assuredly, thou art a Fountain ever full, ever overflowing; a Fire ever burning, and never decaying.

IV. Wherefore, tho' I am not permitted to draw at the Spring-head, nor to drink my fill, yet will I set my lips to the mouth of this heavenly Pipe, that I may catch a few drops at least to assuage my thirst, and not be utterly parch'd up, and die with drought. And tho' I am not able as yet to become all heavenly, all fire, like a Cherubim, or a Seraphim; yet will I use my utmost endeavours to excite devotion, and to prepare my heart in such manner, that I may gather in some few sparks, some short flame at least of this divine Fire, by an humble reception of the Life-giving Sacrament.

“ And whatsoever is wanting in me, do thou,
 “ sweetest *Jesu*, most Holy Saviour, of thy
 “ great bounty and goodness, supply and
 “ make up for me; thou, who hast conde-
 “ scended to invite all unto thee”, saying,
*Come unto me all ye that travel, and are
 heavy laden, and I will refresh you.*

V. I, I am sure, labour in the sweat of my brow, am racked with sorrow of heart, heavy laden with sin, tormented and disqui-
 eted

eted with temptations, entangled and over-
power'd with many evil passions: And there
is none that can help, none that can deliver
and save, but thou Lord GOD my Saviour;
into whose hands I commit my self, and all
that is mine, that thou mayst watch over
me, and conduct me safe to Life everlasting.
“ Receive me to the Praise and Glo-
“ ry of thy Name, thou, who hast provided
“ thy own Body and Blood for my meat
“ and drink. Grant, Lord GOD of my
“ Salvation, that in proportion to my fre-
“ quenting thy Mystery, the passion of my
“ devotion may still more and more in-
“ crease.

CHAP. V.

*Of the Dignity of the Sacrament, and of
the Priestly Function.*

The VOICE of the BELOVED.

I. IF thou hadst the purity of an Angel,
and the sanctity of *John* the Bap-
tist; thou wouldst not be worthy to receive,
nor handle this Sacrament. For this is not

a thing due to the merits of Men, for Man to consecrate, and handle the Sacrament of *Christ*, and to receive for food the bread of Angels. A grand Mystery this! And great also is the dignity of Priests, who are honoured with a privilege, not imparted to the Angels themselves. For Priests regularly ordained in the Church, are the only persons that have commission to ^a administer, and to consecrate the Body of *Christ*. The Priest indeed is the Instrument and Minister, using the Form of words appointed by *Christ* himself: ^b But GOD is the principal Actor therein, and the invisible Worker of this Miracle of Mercy.

II. Thou oughtest therefore more to believe the Omnipotent GOD, in this Super-excellent Sacrament, than thy own sense, or any outward and visible sign. And therefore thou art to approach to this holy action with fear and reverence. Consider thy character, and whose minister thou wert made by imposition of the Bishop's hands. Behold, thou wert ordained a Priest, and

^a In the Latin: *To Celebrate.*

^b In the original Latin: *But GOD is the principal Actor therein, and the invisible Worker; to whose will every thing is subject, and to whose command all things are obedient.*

consecrated to administer; see now, that at all proper times thou offer this Sacrifice to GOD with fidelity and devotion, and that thou carry thy self irreprovably in the whole conduct of thy life. Thou hast not lightened thy burthen, but art now bound with a straiter band of discipline, and art obliged to a greater perfection of Sanctity. A Priest ought to be adorned with all graces, and to be a pattern of good life to others. His conversation ought not to be suited to the ordinary customs and fashions of the world, but conformed to the Angels in Heaven, or to the Saints that excel in virtue upon Earth.

° III. A Priest invested in his holy garments is *Christ's* Vice-gerent; to supplicate and humbly pray to GOD for himself, and

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for

° The Original runs thus: *A Priest array'd in his holy Vestments is Christ's Vicegerent to make humble Supplications and Prayers to GOD for himself, and for all the People. He has behind and before him the sign of the Lord's Cross, for a continual Memorandum of Christ's Passion. He carries it before him figured upon his Robe over his Surplice, to the End he may carefully eye the Footsteps of Christ, and with Zeal and servour endeavour to trace them. He carries it behind him, that he may learn calmly and patiently to bear for GOD's Sake all the Evils and Calamities that Men may load him with. Again, he carries the Cross before him, to put him in Mind of bewailing his own Sins: He carries it behind him, that he may compassionately lament the Sins of others also,*

for all the people; to lament his own sins, and the sins of others; to be a Mediator between GOD and the sinner; and never to cease his holy importunity, till he hath prevailed for grace and mercy. When he administers the holy Sacrament, he honours GOD, rejoycesthe Angels, edifies the Church, comforts the afflicted, strengthens the feeble, and renders himself a partaker of all Blessings.

CHAP. VI.

A Question touching a Preparatory Exercise before the Sacrament.

The VOICE of the DISCIPLE.

I. **W**HEN I consider thy Worthiness,
O Lord, and my own vileness,
I am seized with a horrible trembling, and

also, and look upon himself as a Kind of Mediator interposed between GOD and the Sinner; and never cease from Prayer and Holy Oblation, 'till he hath merited to obtain for them the Grace and Mercy desired. When the Priest celebrates, he honours GOD; he rejoyces the Angels; he edifies the Church; he procures Grace to the Living and rest to the Dead; and draws down upon himself Blessings of all Kinds.

am utterly confounded in my self. For if I approach not, I fly Life: And if I intrude unworthily, I incur thy displeasure. What therefore shall I do, my GOD, my helper, and counsellor in difficulties and necessities?

II. Do thou teach me the right way. Appoint me some short Exercise proper and suitable to the holy Communion. For it is good to know in what manner, and with what degrees of devotion and reverence I ought to prepare my heart for thee, in order profitably to receive thy Sacrament, ^a and to perform so exalted an act of Religion.

CHAP. VII.

*Of the Searching of our own Conscience,
and Purpose of Amendment.*

The VOICE of the BELOVED.

I. **A**BOVE all things, it behoveth the Priest of GOD to approach to the administering, handling, and receiving of this

^a In the Original: *Or even to celebrate thy great and divine Sacrifice.*

Sacrament,

Sacrament, with profound humility of heart, and lowly reverence, with a full Faith, and pious intention of the honour of GOD. Examine diligently thy conscience: And to the utmost of thy power, cleanse and purifie it by true contrition, and humble confession; so as that thou mayst have nothing to load thee, nor be conscious of any thing that may give thee remorse, and hinder a free approach to me. Conceive a just displeasure against all thy sins in general, and for thy daily excesses, lament and bewail them more particularly. And If thou have time and leisure, confess to GOD in the secret of thy heart, all the irregularities of thy passions.

II. Lament and grieve, that thou art still so carnal and worldly: So unmortify'd in thy passions: So full of the motions of concupiscence: So unguarded in thy outward senses: So often engaged and hamper'd in sundry vain fantasies and imaginations: So strongly inclined to exterior things: So careless and remiss as to interior: So apt to let thy self loose to laughter, and extravagant mirth: So hard to weep, and so insensible of compunction: So forward to relaxations, and bodily indulgences: So backward to austerity and fervour: So curious and eager
after

after news, and fine fights: So remiss and slack to embrace humble and abject things: So desirous of possessing much: So strait-handed in giving: So tenacious in keeping: So inconsiderate in speaking: So little master of thy self as to silence: So uncomposed and irregular in thy behaviour: so eager and precipitate in thy actions: So greedy after meat: So deaf to the Word of GOD: So hasty to rest: So slow to labour: So wakeful at Plays: So drowsie at the holy Vigils: So impatient till they are over: So wandering and unfixed in thy attention: So negligent in keeping thy stated hours of devotion: So backward to Communicate: * So dry and barren in Communicating: So quickly distracted: So seldom wholly recollected in thy own heart: So suddenly moved to anger: So apt to give offence to others: So prone to judge: So stiff and positive in those judgments and hard constructions: So transported with prosperity: So weak and dejected in adversity: So full of good resolutions and intentions, and bringing so few of them to good effect.

III. After thou hast confess'd and deplor'd these, and other defects of thine, with

* In the Original: *So cold and lukewarm in celebrating.*
grief,

grief, and a deep resentment of thy own frailty; make a firm resolution to be always amending thy life, and advancing still more and more in goodness. Then, with perfect resignation, and without the least reserve of thy own will, offer up thy self, to the honour of my Name, a perpetual whole burnt-offering upon the altar of thy heart; by committing, that is, thy body and soul, faithfully unto me; that so thou mayst worthily approach to offer this Eucharistical Sacrifice to GOD, and to receive the Sacrament of my Body to thy soul's health.

IV. For there is no Oblation more acceptable, no means more effectual for the blotting out of sins, than for a Man to offer up himself to GOD purely and entirely, together with the Oblation of the Body of *Christ*^b in the holy Communion. If a Man do what in him lieth, and truly repent; at what time soever he cometh to me for pardon and grace; *As I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live: For I will be merciful to his unrighteousness, and his sins and iniquities will I remember no more*^c.

^b In the Latin: *In the Mass and in the Communion.*

^c Ezek. xviii.

CHAP. VIII.

*Of the Oblation of Christ upon the Cross,
and Resignation of our selves.*

The VOICE of the BELOVED.

I. **A**S I, with naked body, and arms extended, of my own accord offered up my self upon the Cross to GOD my Father for thy sins; so as that nothing of me remained, but my whole entire self was delivered up in Sacrifice, to appease the divine Majesty: In like manner oughtest thou also to offer up thy self to me^a in the blessed Sacrament, a voluntary, pure and holy Sacrifice, with all the power, ability, and strength of thy heart and soul. What do I require of thee more, but that thou wouldest endeavour to resign up thy self entirely to me? Whatsoever thou givest besides thy self, is of no account with me. For I seek not thy gift, but thee.

II. As it would not suffice thee to have all things whatsoever, without me; so neither can it please me whatsoever thou givest, if thou offer not thy self. Offer up thy self to me,

^a In the Original: *Every Day in the Mass.*

and give thy self wholly for GOD, and thy Offering shall be accepted. Behold I offered up my whole self unto my Father for thee; I have also given thee my whole Body and Blood for food, to the end I might be entirely thine, and thou mightest remain entirely mine. But if thou retainest any thing of thy self, and dost not freely, and of thy own accord, resign up thy self to be governed, and disposed of according to my will, thy Oblation is not entire, neither will the union between us be perfect. Therefore a voluntary Oblation of thy self into the hands of GOD ought to go before all thy other works, if thou meanest to attain liberty and grace. For this is the reason, why so few become illuminated, and inwardly free, because they cannot find in their hearts wholly and entirely to renounce themselves. It is a fixed irreversibile Decree of mine: *Unless a man forsake all, he cannot be my Disciple.* If thou desirest therefore to be my Disciple, offer up thy self to me, with all thy affections.

CHAP. IX.

That we ought to offer up our selves, and all that is ours, to GOD; and to Pray for all Men.

The VOICE of the DISCIPLE.

I. **T**Hine, O Lord, are all things that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth. I desire to offer up my self unto thee, as a voluntary Oblation, and to remain thine for ever. O Lord, in the simplicity of my heart, I offer my self unto thee this day, a Sacrifice of perpetual praise, and eternally devoted to thy service, and to the obedience of thy holy Will. Accept me, together with this holy Oblation of thy own precious Body, which I this day offer unto thee in presence of the Angels, invisibly here assisting; to the end it may avail to my Salvation, and to the Salvation of all thy people.

II. Lord, I offer unto thee all my sins and transgressions, which I have committed before thee, and thy holy Angels, from the day I was first capable of sinning, even to this very hour, upon thy propitiatory Altar;

tar; to the end thou wouldst burn and consume all equally with the fire of thy love, and wipe out all the stains and spots whatsoever of my sins, and cleanse my conscience perfectly from every offence, and restore unto me thy favour, which I have forfeited by sinning, by granting me a full remission of all, and mercifully receiving me to a Kiss of Peace in token of thy perfect forgiveness and reconciliation.

III. What else can I do for my sins, but humbly confess and lament them, and incessantly implore thy merciful forgiveness? Lord, I implore it, hear me favourably, who lie prostrate here before thee, O my GOD. All my sins are exceeding offensive to me, I will never commit them more, but do grieve, and will grieve for them, as long as I live; being ready to testify my repentance by the amendment of my Life, and to make satisfaction to the utmost of my power. Forgive me, O GOD, forgive me my sins, for thy holy Name's sake: Save my soul, which thou hast redeemed with thy own most precious Blood. Behold, I commit my self to thy Mercy, I resign my self into thy hands. Deal with me according to thy Goodness, not according to my sins and iniquities.

IV. I offer thee also whatever in me is good; a poor imperfect Oblation, I confess; but I offer it to this end, that thou mayst purify and sanctify it; that thou mayst accept it graciously, and render it pleasing in thy sight, and add daily new degrees of perfection to it; and bring also at last this poor slothful unprofitable Servant of thine, to a blessed and praise-worthy End.

V. I likewise offer unto thee all the pious desires of the devout, the necessities of my Parents, Friends, Brethren, Sisters, and all that are dear unto me, and that have done good either to my self or others for the love of thy Name: ^a And that have desired and begged my Prayers for them and all theirs: That they may all receive the help of thy Grace, the refreshings of thy consolation, protection from dangers, and deliverance from pains; and that being rescued and guarded from all evil, they may with joyful and thankful hearts, extol and magnify thy excellent Goodness.

^a In the Original; *And that have desired and begg'd Prayers and Masses to be said by me in behalf of themselves, and all theirs, whether they are still living in the Flesh, or are now departed this Life.*

VI. I offer thee also my Prayers, and Peace offerings, particularly for those, that have offended me in any respect whatsoever, that have grieved or afflicted me, that have defamed or reviled me, or done me any considerable damage or injury. And likewise for all that I my self have at any time grieved, despighted, ill-treated, reviled, scandalized, by word or deed, knowingly or ignorantly, with, or without design; intreating thee to forgive all of us our sins, and all our offences against one another. Take, Lord, from our hearts all jealousy, indignation, anger, all disposition to strife and debate, and whatsoever else may any way hurt Charity, or tend to abate Brotherly Love. Have mercy, have mercy, Lord, on all that crave thy Mercy; give Grace to those that want it; and cause us to be such manner of persons in our life and conversation, that we may be worthy the enjoyment of thy Grace, and proceed in all Godliness and Virtue to the attainment of Life Eternal. *Amen.*

CHAP. X.

*That the Holy Communion is not lightly
to be forborn.*

The VOICE of the BELOVED.

I. **T**HOU oughtest frequently to have recourse to the Fountain of Grace, and Divine Mercy, to the Fountain of Goodness, and of all Purity; * to the end thou mayst be cured of thy passions and vices, and be render'd more strong and vigilant against all the temptations and deceits of the Devil. The Enemy well knowing the mighty advantage and sovereign power of the Holy Communion, uses all means, and takes all occasions, to discourage, as much as ever he can, and to hinder the faithful and devout Christian from receiving it.

II. For some persons when they are disposing and fitting themselves to receive the Holy Communion, are then most attack'd with the evil suggestions and illusions of Satan. That wicked Spirit (as it is writ-

* In the Original; *To the end thou mayst merit to be cured.*

ten in *Job*) cometh among the Sons of GOD, to disturb them, according to his accustomed malice, filling them with excessive fears, and perplexing them with doubts and scruples; to the end he may either diminish their affection, or by his assaults overthrow their Faith; and by this means to cause them either to abstain wholly, or to come with coldness and indifference. But his crafts and suggestions, tho' never so foul and horrid, are not to be minded; but all his phantasms and illusions are to be retorted back upon his own head. The wretch is to be contemned and scorned, nor must the Holy Communion be omitted for his assaults, and the commotions and disturbances which he raiseth.

III. Many times also too much sollicitude for the obtaining devotion, and I know not what anxiety touching confession, hindereth. Act according to the counsel of the wise, and lay aside anxiety and scruple: For it hinders the Grace of GOD, and destroys the devotion of the Soul. Omit not the Holy Communion for any ordinary disturbance, or heaviness of Spirit: But make the more haste to ^b confess thy sins, and

^b In the Latin; *To Confession.*

freely forgive others all their offences. And if thou thy self hast offended any one, humbly beg pardon, and GOD will freely forgive thee.

IV. To what purpose is it to put off examination and repentance, and to defer coming to the Holy Communion? Purge thy Soul forthwith, discharge the Venom immediately, make haste to apply the remedy, and thou wilt find the cure easier, than if thou hadst deferred it long. If thou omittest it to day upon one reason, another perhaps, and a more prevailing one may fall out to-morrow: And so thou mayst be hinder'd a long time from the Communion, and become more unfit. With all possible speed shake off thy present heaviness and sloth: For there can never come any good of prolonging thy anxiety, of passing day after day in disquietness and trouble of mind, and for ordinary every-day hindrances, excluding thy self from divine benefits. Nay, it is exceeding prejudicial to defer communicating long, for it usually breeds a strange carelessness, and numbness of soul to that, and all other holy Duties. But, which is a most lamentable thing to consider, ma-

* In the Original; *To put off Confession.*

ny lukewarm and loose people are glad of excuses, and defer Communicating meerly for this reason, lest they should be obliged to a greater strictness of Life, and watchfulness over themselves.

V. How chill, alas! is those Mens love, how feeble their devotion, who, upon such frivolous pretences, can dispense with the Holy Communion! How happy that Man, how dear to GOD, who so ordereth his conversation, and keepeth his conscience in that purity and cleanness, as to be prepared, and zealously disposed to Communicate even every day of his Life, ^d if he had opportunity. If a Man sometimes abstain out of a deep humility, or upon some lawful impediment, he is to be commended for his reverence of the Ordinance. But if indifference, or spiritual numbness hath crept upon him, he ought to rouse himself, and do what in him lies, and the Lord will second his desire even for his good will, which he principally regards.

VI. But whensoever he is lawfully hinder'd, he shall always have a good will, and pious intention to Communicate, and so shall

^d In the Original; *If he had opportunity, and could do it without censure.*

not want the fruit of the Sacrament. For nothing can hinder a devout Soul from Communicating *Spiritually*, and so as to receive the full benefit of *Christ's* Body, every day, and every hour : Yet notwithstanding on certain days, and at appointed seasons, ought he to receive with an affectionate reverence the Body of his Redeemer *Sacramentally*, and to intend the praise and honour of GOD, rather than to seek his own consolation and comfort thereby. For as often soever as he devoutly recollects and meditates the Mystery of the Incarnation, and the Passion of *Christ*, and is inflamed with the love of him, so often does he mystically Communicate, and is invisibly refresh'd.

VII. He that never prepares himself but upon the approach of a Festival, or when custom calls upon him, will most commonly come unprepared. He is the happy man, who makes it his frequent practice, and constantly offers up himself a whole Burnt-Offering to the Lord. In the act of Communicating thou oughtest not to give disturbance to the Congregation by any singularity in thy behaviour, but to keep rule and order: And to have more regard to the customs of the Church, and the conveni-

ence of others, than to thy own particular zeal and devotion.

CHAP. XI.

That the Body of Christ, and the Holy Scripture, are absolutely necessary to the Faithful Soul.

The VOICE of the DISCIPLE.

I. O Sweetest Lord *Jesus*, how marvellously great is the pleasure of a devout Soul, feasting with thee at thy own Table; where no other meat is set before her to feed upon, but thy self, her only Beloved, of all the desires of her heart the most desirable! And verily for my own part, it would be an infinite pleasure to me, to pour forth from the depth of an affectionate and grateful heart a flood of tears in thy presence, and with pious *Magdalene* to wash thy feet therewith. But where is such devotion to be found? Where, so plentiful an effusion of holy tears? Verily in thy presence, and the presence of thy holy Angels, my whole heart ought to burn within me, and to weep for joy. For I have
thee

thee in the Sacrament really present, tho' veil'd and hid under a different form.

II. For my eyes could not bear to behold thee in thy natural and divine brightness; no nor even the whole world support it self under the splendors of the glory of thy Majesty. Herein therefore thou consultest my weakness, in that thou hidest thy self under the Sacrament. I verily have, and adore him, whom the Angels adore in Heaven; but I as yet in Faith; they, face to face, and without a veil. I must rest my self contented with the light of a true Faith, and walk therein, till the day of everlasting brightness dawn and the shades of figures and representations are scattered and done away. And when that which is perfect, is come, then shall the use of Sacraments cease; because the Blessed in possession of the heavenly glory need no Sacramental expedient, nor intermediate aid: For they rejoyce without end in the presence of GOD, beholding his glory face to face, and being transformed into the brightness of the divine Infinitude from glory to glory, they taste the Word of GOD made flesh, as he was from the beginning, and remaineth to Eternity.

III. The remembrance of this marvellous Blessedness renders even the greatest spiritual

al consolation extremely tedious and irksome to me: For so long as I behold not my Lord openly in his glory, all whatsoever I see and hear in the world I account as nothing. Thou art my witness, O God, that nothing can comfort me, no creature give me rest, besides thee my God, whom I desire eternally to contemplate. But this is not possible, whilst I remain in this mortal life. Therefore it is necessary for me to frame my self to great patience, and to submit my self in every desire to thee. For even thy Saints, O Lord, who are now triumphantly rejoycing with thee in the Kingdom of Heaven; whilst they lived, waited, in Faith and great Patience, the coming of thy glory. What they believed, I believe: What they hoped, I hope: Where they are arrived, thither by thy grace I trust to come. I will walk in the mean time in Faith, supported and fortified by the examples of the Saints. I have also thy holy Scriptures for my consolation and instruction, and wherein, as in a glass, to view and adorn my Soul: and over and above all these, thy most holy Body, as my sovereign balm, and refuge to fly to in all ills.

IV. For I perceive two things to be most highly, most indispensably necessary to me
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in this life, without which the misery of living in this wretched world would be insupportable to me. Whilst I am detained in the prison of this Body, I acknowledge my self to stand in need of two things, that is to say, Food and Light. Accordingly thou hast given thy poor weak creature thy holy Body for the refreshment and sustenance of my Soul and Body: and hast set thy holy Word for *a lanthorn unto my feet, and a light unto my paths*^a. Without these two I could not possibly live comfortably: For the Word of God is the light of my Soul: And thy Sacrament, the bread of life. Those may be called also the two Tables, placed on either side in the Treasury of the holy Church. One is the Table of the sacred Altar, furnished with the holy bread, that is, the precious Body of *Christ*: The other is that of the divine Law, containing the holy doctrine, instructing and training up a right Faith, and carrying it on with confidence, even till it arrive at those profound secrets within the veil, where is the Holy of Holies. Thanks be to thee, Lord *Jesus*, light of eternal light, for the Table of thy heavenly doctrine, which thou hast

^a Psal. cxix.

ministred unto us by thy servants the Prophets and Apostles, and other holy teachers.

V. Thanks be to thee, Creator and redeemer of Man, who, to manifest thy love to the whole world, hast prepared a great supper, wherein thou hast exhibited to us, not a typical lamb, but thy own most holy Body and Blood for our meat and drink; rejoycing all the Faithful with the holy Banquet, and inebriating them with the cup of Salvation; wherein are all the delights of Paradise, and where the holy Angels feast with us, but with a more ravishing and transporting sweetness.

VI. O how high and honourable is the Function of Priests, to whom it is given to consecrate the Lord of glory with holy words, to bless him with their lips, to hold him in their hands, to take him into their mouth, and to administer him to others! O how clean ought those hands to be, how pure that mouth, how holy that body, how immaculate and spotless that heart, into which the author of purity so often enters! Nothing but what is holy, nothing but what is honest, nothing but what is edifying ought to proceed out of the Priest's mouth, who so often receiveth the Sacrament of *Christ*.

VII. His

VII. His eyes ought to be simple, and chaste, which are wont to behold the Body of *Christ*: His hands pure, and lifted up to Heaven, which art wont to handle the Maker of Heaven and Earth. That injunction of the old Law obliged the Priests in a more especial manner: *Be ye holy, for I the Lord your GOD am holy*^b.

“VIII. Assist us Almighty GOD, with
 “ thy grace, that we who have undertaken
 “ the Priestly Office, may be able worthily
 “ and devoutly to minister unto thee in all
 “ purity, and good conscience. And if
 “ we cannot lead our life in such an unblemished
 “ innocence, as our Profession obliges
 “ us; yet grant us at least worthily to bewail
 “ the offences we have committed;
 “ and in the spirit of humility, and in an
 “ honest hearty purpose of better life, to
 “ serve thee with more fervency for the
 “ time to come.

^b Levit. xix.

CHAP. XII.

That he who intends to Communicate ought with great Diligence to prepare himself for Christ.

The VOICE of the BELOVED.

I. **I** Am a lover of purity, and the giver of all holiness. A pure heart is what I seek, and that is the place of my rest. *Prepare me a large upper room furnished, and I will come and eat the passover at thy house with my Disciples^a.* If thou desire that I should come unto thee, and make my abode with thee, *purge out thy old leaven^b,* and cleanse the habitation of thy heart. Shut out all the world; banish all sin, and still all the tumults of thy passions: *Sit as a sparrow alone upon the house-top,* and think over thy transgressions in the bitterness of thy soul. For every Lover prepareth the best and fairest room for his best Beloved, and by his care and diligence to receive him, expresses the greatness of his love and affection for him.

^a Luke xxii.

^b 1 Cor. v. 7.

II. Yet know withal, that thou art not able to make sufficient preparation from the merit or worth of any action of thine, tho' thou shouldest employ a whole year in preparing, and have nothing else in thy thoughts. But it is entirely owing to my grace and mercy, that thou art permitted to approach my Table; in the same manner as if a beggar were invited to dinner to a rich Man, who has nothing else to return for his favours, but to humble himself, and to give him thanks. Do thy part, and do it with all the diligence thou canst; come not for fashion's sake, nor upon compulsion; but with fear, and reverence, and love, receive the Body of thy beloved Lord GOD, vouchsafing to come unto thee. I am he that have called thee: I have commanded it to be done: I will supply and make up what is wanting in thee: Come, and receive me.

III. When I give thee the grace of devotion, render thanks to thy GOD: Not because thou art worthy, but because I had compassion on thee. If thou hast it not, but rather findest thy self dry and cold, be instant in Prayer, sigh, and knock: And desist not, till thou art vouchsafed a crumb at least or drop of life-preserving Grace. Thou standest

standest in need of me, I stand not in need of thee. Nor comest thou to sanctify me, But I come to sanctify, and to better thee. Thou comest to be sanctified by me, and to be made one with me, to receive fresh supplies of spiritual strength, and to be inflamed a-new to an amendment of life. Do not neglect this Grace; but prepare thy heart with all diligence, and bring in thy Beloved unto thee.

IV. But thou oughtest not only to prepare thy self for devotion before the communion, but carefully also to preserve thy self therein, after thou hast received the Sacrament. Nor is there less necessity of care and watchfulness, after, than of devout preparation, before. For a strict guard, afterwards, is the best preparation again, in order to receive greater degrees of Grace. For nothing indisposes a Man more, than immediately to give himself a loose to outward comforts. Beware of much talk, keep in thy closet, and enjoy thy GOD. For thou hast one, whom the whole world cannot rob thee of. I am he, whom thou oughtest to give thy self wholly unto; so as to live ever hereafter not in thy self, but in me, without all care and sollicitude, and in a most profound rest and tranquillity of mind.

CHAP. XIII.

That the devout Soul ought, with all its Powers, to desire Union with Christ in the Sacrament.

The VOICE of the DISCIPLE.

I. **L**ORD, who will grant me this blessed privilege, that I may find thee only, and open my whole heart unto thee, and enjoy thee, even as my Soul desireth: And that from henceforward no person may either despise or regard me, no created thing affect me, no eye observe me, but that thou alone mayst talk to me, and I to thee, even as the beloved Soul is wont to converse with her Beloved, and friend to eat and drink with friend. This is my Prayer, this my desire, that I may be made entirely one with thee, and that I may withdraw my heart from all created things, and learn more and more to taste and relish heavenly and eternal things, by the frequency of holy Communion. Ah Lord GOD, when shall I be wholly united with, and swallowed up in thee, even to a perfect and entire oblivion and forgetfulness of my self?

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Thou

Thou in me, and I in thee^a, and thus may we continue one for ever.

II. Verily thou art my Beloved, *my chosen, the chiefest among ten thousand*^b, in whom my Soul is well pleased to make her abode all the days of her life. Verily thou art the peace of my Soul: In thee is found the sovereign peace, and the true repose; out of thee, nothing but labour and sorrow, and endless misery. *Verily thou art a GOD that hidest thy self*^c; and *thou hast no intercourse with the wicked*^d; but *thy secret is with the humble and simple*^e. O how sweet is thy Spirit, O Lord, who, to demonstrate the tenderness of thy affection to thy Children, vouchsafest to refresh them with the most delicious bread, that came down from Heaven! *Verily there is no nation so great, which hath GOD so nigh unto them, as thou, our GOD, art unto all thy faithful ones*^f; unto whom, for their daily consolation, and for the lifting up of their hearts to Heaven, thou givest thy self to be fed upon, and enjoyed.

III. For what other nation is so illustrious as the Christian People? Or what crea-

^a John xix.

^b Cantic. iv. 9, 10.

^c Isai. xlv. 15.

^d Job xxi. 6.

^e Prov. iii. 32.

^f Deut. iv. 7.

ture under Heaven so dearly beloved, as the devout Soul, into which God enters, to feed her with his own glorious flesh? O grace unspeakable! O condescension most amazing! O love unmeasurable, indulged to Man in a way most singular! But what shall I render back to the Lord in acknowledgement of so inestimable a Benefit, so infinite a Charity? There is nothing in my power to present, which will be more acceptable, than to give my whole heart to my God, and to unite it to him so inseparably, that nothing may ever dissolve the Union. Then shall my Soul be glad, and all that is within me leap for joy, when my heart is perfectly united to my God. Then shall he say unto me: *If thou wilt be with me, I will be with thee.* And I shall reply unto him: *Vouchsafe Lord, to abide with me, I would most gladly abide with thee. This is my whole and sole desire, that my heart may be united unto thee.*

CHAP. XIV.

*Of the vehement Longing of some devout
People for the Body of Christ.*

The VOICE of the DISCIPLE.

I. **O** How great is the multitude of thy sweetness, O Lord, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee^a! When I call to mind some devout Souls approaching thy Sacrament, O Lord, with the highest and most affectionate devotion, then many times I am confounded in my self, and blush, that I should approach thy Altar, and the Table of Holy Communion, with so much lukewarmness, and coldness: That I remain so dry and barren, and so void of all affection of heart: That I am not all inflamed in the Presence of thee my GOD; nor feel those vehement attractions and affections, wherewith many devout Souls have been transported, who out of an excessive longing to Communicate, and from a tender affectionate love to their Lord, have not been able to refrain from tears: But

^a Psal. xxxi. 20.

with the mouth of their heart and body at once most passionately gasped and panted after thee, O GOD, the living Fountain, being no otherwise able to moderate, nor satiate their hunger, but by receiving thy Body with all imaginable delight and spiritual greediness.

II. O the true, the ardent Faith of those persons! A convincing proof of thy adorable Presence. For they truly know their Lord *in breaking of bread*, whose heart burns so mightily within them, upon *Jesus* his walking with them^b. Such affection, and devotion, such vehement love and ardor are often, alas, widely remov'd from me. "Be favourable and propitious unto
" me, good *Jesus*, sweet and bounteous
" Saviour; and grant unto thy poor famished beggar, sometimes at least to feel
" at the Holy Communion some small degree of the cordial affection of thy love,
" to the end my Faith may be more strengthened; my Hope in thy goodness advanced; and my Charity, once perfectly kindled, and fed with the Manna from Heaven, may never faint.

^b Luke xxiv. 30, 31, 32.

III And assuredly thy mercy is able to bestow upon me the Grace desired, and in the spirit of fervour, when the hour of thy good pleasure is come, most graciously to visit me. For although I burn not with a desire equal to that of thine especial devout ones, yet (thanks be to thy Grace) I have a desire at least of the same mighty inflamed desire; praying, and longing to be made a partaker with all such fervent lovers of thine, and to be reckoned one of their holy Society.

CHAP. XV.

That the Grace of Devotion is obtained by Humility, and Self-denial.

The VOICE of the BELOVED.

I. **T**HOU oughtest earnestly to seek the Grace of Devotion, passionately to ask it, patiently and confidently to wait for it, thankfully to receive it, humbly to preserve it, diligently to co-operate with it, and to permit the time and measure of the heavenly Visitation, till it arrive, to the Will of GOD. Thou oughtest in an especial manner

manner to humble thy self, when thou feelest little or no Devotion in thy heart; but not to be cast down too much, nor to grieve immoderately. GOD frequently gives in an instant, what he denied a long time. He gives sometimes at the end of Prayer, what he deferr'd granting at the beginning.

II. If Grace were always given immediately, and came at a with, the Blessing would be too mighty for the frailty of human nature to bear. And therefore thou oughtest to wait for the Grace of Devotion with an humble patience, and in a comfortable hope of obtaining it. However, impute it to thy self, and thy own sins, when it is not given; or given, but insensibly withdrawn. A small matter sometimes obstructs, or withdraws Grace; at least, if that may be called small, and ought not rather to be reputed very considerable, which intercepts and hinders so invaluable a Blessing. And when thou hast removed, and perfectly mastered this obstacle, be it small or great, thou hast thy desire.

III. For from the moment that thou hast submitted, and resigned up thy self to GOD with the whole bent of thy heart; and seekest neither this nor that from any private inclination, or desire of thine own,

but hast entirely planted and settled thy self in him alone; thou shalt find thy self in a state of Union, and Peace; because nothing will relish so well, nor please thee so much, as the good pleasure of the Divine Will. Whosoever therefore shall, in simplicity of heart, lift up his intention unto GOD, and empty himself of all inordinate love, or dislike of any created thing whatsoever; that person will be in the fittest disposition for the reception of Grace, and worthy the gift of Devotion. For the Lord bestoweth his Blessings there, where he findeth the vessels empty. And by how much the more perfectly a Man renounceth the things below, and the more he dieth to himself by a contempt of himself, so much the quicker doth Grace come, so much the more abundantly doth it enter, and so much the higher doth it lift up the free and unengaged heart.

IV. Then shall he see the ^a loving-kindness of the Lord, then shall he flow in the riches of his Grace, then shall he stand amazed at his own abundance, and his heart shall be enlarged within him, because the hand of the Lord is with him, and he hath committed himself entirely to his disposal

^a Isaiah lx.

for evermore. Lo! Thus shall the Man be blessed, that seeketh the Lord with his whole heart, and receiveth not his Soul in vain. This Man in receiving the Holy Eucharist is worthy the inestimable Grace of Union with God; because in this action he hath no regard to his own particular devotion, and consolation; but above all devotion and consolation, to the Honour and Glory of God.

CHAP. XVI.

That we ought to lay open our necessities to Christ, and to implore his Grace.

The VOICE of the DISCIPLE.

I. **O** Sweetest, and most loving Lord, whom now with devout longings I desire to receive; thou knowest my weakness, and the necessity I labour under; thou understandest in what a distressed condition I lie both as to misery and sin; how often I am bowed down with grief and affliction of spirit, tormented with temptations, disorder'd with passion, and defiled with sin. For remedy, to thee I come; for comfort
and

and relief, thee I pray to. I speak to one, who knoweth all things, to whom all my inward parts are naked and open, and who alone canst most compleatly comfort and help me. Thou knowest what good things I more especially want, and how very slender and low my stock of virtue is.

II. Behold, I stand before thee poor and naked, begging Grace, and imploring Mercy. Refresh the bowels of thy poor famish'd beggar, inflame my frozen benumbed soul with the fire of thy Love, enlighten my blind eyes with the shine of thy Presence. Turn all earthly things into bitterness to me; all crosses and afflictions into patience; all things here below, and things created, into contempt and oblivion. Lift up my heart to thee in Heaven, fix it there, and suffer me to come down no more to roam the Earth. Do thou alone from this very moment become sweet unto my Soul, even for ever and ever; since thou alone art my meat, and my drink, my love, and my joy, my sweetness, and my whole and sole Good.

III. O that, by the power of thy Presence thou wouldst set me all in flames, consume me entirely, and transform me into thy self; to the end I may be made one
Spirit

Spirit with thee, by the Grace of an internal Union, and the dissolution of a flaming Love! Let me not, I beseech thee, be sent away empty: Suffer me not to retire from thy Presence hungry and thirsty; but co-operate with me mercifully, as thou hast often co-operated with thy Saints marvelously. What wonder, if I became all fire by virtue of my Union with thee, and were wholly lost and consumed in my self and my own nature; since thou art a Fire ever burning, and never decaying; a Love purifying the heart, and enlightning the understanding?

CHAP. XVII.

Of the ardent Love, and most passionate Desire of the Devout Soul to receive Christ.

The VOICE of the DISCIPLE.

I. **W**ITH the greatest devotion, and an ardent Love, with the whole affection of my heart, and fervour of my soul, I desire to receive thee, O Lord, even in the same manner as many Saints, and
devout

devout persons have in Communicating desired thee, such as have most highly pleas'd thee in holiness of Life, and have been bless'd with a most exalted devotion. O my GOD, thou Love Eternal, my whole and only Good, my Happiness Everlasting! I desire to receive thee with the most vehement longings, and most awful and profound reverence, that any of thy Saints ever had, or could possibly feel.

II. And altho' I am unworthy to receive all those sentiments of devotion, yet nevertheless I offer unto thee the whole affection of my heart, begging thee to accept it, in the same manner as if I alone had all those, so highly pleasing unto thee, and transportingly inflamed desires; yea more, whatsoever devout resentments a pious mind can possibly conceive, or desire, all these with the utmost veneration, and from the bottom of a heart full of love and gratitude, I present and offer unto thee. I desire not to reserve any thing to my self, but to make a most free and chearful Oblation of all I have and am, to thy use. My Lord and my GOD, my Creator, and my Redeemer, I desire to receive thee this day with the same affection, reverence, praise and honour; with the same gratitude, worthiness and love; with

with the same faith, hope, and purity, with which thy most holy Mother, the glorious Virgin *Mary* receiv'd and desired thee, when she returned that humble and devout answer to the Angel, who brought her the glad tidings of thy myſterious Incarnation: *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word*^a.

III. And as thy blessed Fore-runner, that greatest of Saints, *John Baptist*, transported at thy Presence, leaped in the Joy of the Holy Ghost, whilst he was yet in his Mother's Womb: And some time after seeing thee walking amongst Men, said in profound humility of Spirit, and with devout affection: *He that hath the Bride, is the Bridegroom: But the Friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with exceeding joy, because of the Bridegroom's voice*^b: So I also desire to be inflamed with most holy, and most ardent longings, and to stand before thee with transporting joys, whilst I present myself unto thee with the whole affection of my heart. Nor do I present myself only, but I also offer and present unto thee, all the transports, all the ardent affections, the raptures

^a Luke i.

John iii. 29.

and extasies, the supernatural illuminations, and heavenly visions of all devout hearts, together with all the virtues, powers, and praises, that ever were, or shall be attributed, render'd, and chanted unto thee by all creatures as well in Heaven as Earth; in behalf of my self, and of all that have commended themselves to my Prayers; to the end thou mayst be worthily praised, and magnified by all and each of them for ever and ever.

IV. My Lord and my GOD, accept, I pray thee, my hearty wishes and desires of giving thee infinite praise, and immense blessing; which according to the multitude of thy unspeakable greatness, are most worthily due unto thee. These I yield thee, and desire to yield thee every day, and every moment of my life; and I do moreover most affectionately invite and conjure all the blessed Spirits above and all thy faithful People upon earth, to join with me in rendering praise and thanksgivings unto thee.

V. Let all the nations, tribes, and languages of the world praise thee, and magnifie thy adorable and heavenly-sweet Name, in all the transports of a holy joy, and an ardent devotion. And let all that celebrate, and with a firm and full Faith receive thy most sublime Sacrament, find grace and
mercy

mercy before thee, and let them humbly intreat and prevail for sinful me. And when they shall have obtained their desir'd devotion, and blessed Union, and that they are returned from the holy heavenly Table, richly comforted, and marvellously refreshed, let them not disdain to remember poor me.

CHAP. XVIII.

That a Man ought not nicely and curiously to examine and search into the Mystery of the Sacrament; but humbly to imitate Christ, submitting his Sense to Faith.

The VOICE of the BELOVED.

I. **T**HOU oughtest to beware of all curious and unprofitable searching into this most profound Sacrament, if thou wouldst not be involv'd in a maze of endless doubts. *He that is a searcher of the Majesty of the most High, shall be oppressed by his glory^a.* God is able to work more than Man can comprehend. A pious and

^a See Prov. xxv. 27.

humble inquiry into divine Truths, always ready to learn, and careful to walk in the sound Doctrines and Opinions of the Fathers, is not to be discommended.

II. Blessed is that Simplicity, which declines the difficult rugged ways of controversy and dispute, and goes on in the plain and sure path of GOD's Commandments. Many have made shipwreck of their Devotion, by affecting to sound the deep things of Religion. Faith is required of thee, and a good Life; not height of understanding, nor deep penetration into the Mysteries of GOD. If thou understandest not, nor comprehendest the things that are below thee, how shouldst thou comprehend those things that are above thee? Submit thy self to GOD, and humble thy own sense to Faith, and the Light of Knowledge shall be given thee, so far as is necessary and profitable for thee.

III. Some Men are grievously tempted touching Faith and the Sacrament, but this is not to be charged upon themselves, but rather upon the Enemy. Mind it not, dispute not with thy own thoughts, neither give an answer to the doubts, which the Devil puts into thy head; but believe the Word of GOD, believe his Saints and Prophets,
and

and the evil Spirit will flee from thee. It is many times very advantageous to a Servant of GOD to be thus assaulted. For the Devil tempteth not unbelievers and sinners, whom he is already sure of; but for the faithful and devout, those he tempts and torments fundry ways.

IV. Proceed therefore with an honest, and undoubting Faith, and with lowly reverence approach the Sacrament. And whatsoever thou art not able to understand, commit with security and confidence to Almighty GOD. GOD deceiveth thee not; but he is often deceived, who leans too much upon his own understanding. GOD walketh with the simple, revealeth himself to the humble, giveth understanding to Babes, openeth the eyes of the pure in heart to discern his secrets, and hideth his Grace from the curious, and proud. Human Reason is weak, and may be deceived: But a true Faith cannot err, and is incapable of being deceived.

V. All natural reasoning, and human search and enquiry ought to follow and wait upon Faith, not to go before, nor infringe it. For Faith and Charity are here in their highest pitch of exaltation, and work by secret and inconceivable ways in

F f

this

this most holy, most august, and superlatively excellent Sacrament. The Eternal, the Incomprehensible, and infinitely Powerful GOD, doth great and unsearchable things in Heaven, and in Earth, nor is there any tracing or finding out of his wonderful Works. If the Works of GOD were of such a nature, as that they could easily be fathom'd by human Reason, they would be no longer Marvellous, nor could they be reasonably called Unspeakable.

The End of the Four Books of the
IMITATION of CHRIST.

THOMAS

THOMAS a KEMPIS,

CANON REGULAR of the Order
of St. AUSTIN.

Of the Three Tabernacles.

A GOLDEN TREATISE.

A golden treatise

To the Reader.

*In these Three Tabernacles, Three
Military Virtues lie incamp'd. In
the first, POVERTY; in the second,
HUMILITY; in the third, PATIENCE.*

Of the Tabernacle of POVERTY.

CHAP. I.

*Of the manifold Probation and Trial of
the Elect.*

THE DISCIPLE.

I.  T is written in the Prophet:
*The patient abiding of the poor
shall not perish for ever^a.*

Great, O my Lord God, is
the Patience of thy servants. And herein
consisteth the victory of those, who over-
come all the adversities of this world. For
thou hast said: *In your Patience possess
ye your souls^b.* Thou provest us sundry
ways, and furroundest us on all sides with
tribulations, thou triest and examinest us
sometimes from without, sometimes from
within, sometimes by open, sometimes by
secret temptations: So that there is nothing
in us, which passeth not the fire of temp-

^a Psal. ix. 18.

^b Luke xxi. 19.

tation. It pleaseth thee to try us in all things, and to afflict us in many: to the end that being proved in all things, and delivered out of fundry miseries, we may render proportionate thanks to thy mercy and goodness. This is well-pleasing, and seemeth good in thy sight, and is conducive to our spiritual growth. *If thou Lord GOD, art for us, who can be against us?* I will therefore follow thee, O Lord, in all things, provided thou wilt vouchsafe to be my guide. *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: Because thou art with me^d.* Nevertheless *I will ingenuously acknowledge my unrighteousness unto the Lord: And mine infirmities I will not hide^e:* If perchance I may so obtain the lenitives of consolation from the good Physician.

II. Behold, Lord, my Poverty and infirmity, hearken to what I say, for to thee have I revealed my cause. Lo, I desire rest, and thou enjoimest me labour. I aspire after high and lofty things, but thou proposhest to me low and mean things. I seek plenty of delights, and thou advisest the straitness of Poverty. My Lord GOD, is this thy counsel and word?

^e Rom. viii. 31. ^d Psal. xxiii. 4. ^e Psal. xxxii. 5.

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JESUS-CHRIST.

Verily it is.

THE DISCIPLE.

How exceeding difficult and painful is the practice of this!

JESUS-CHRIST.

Love me, and thou shalt perceive no difficulty nor pain herein. The fire of charity will easily burn up and consume all the evil and misery of Poverty. It is a pleasure to a lover to be made poor with the Son of God. Every burden is light, which charity commandeth to bear. Nor will travel be grievous to any one, whose heart is strengthened with the bread of charity.

THE DISCIPLE.

Well hast thou spoken Lord, Be it I pray as thou hast said. Thou that hast given counsel, give thy aid also. Let it become all pleasant, whatsoever seemeth grievous to the flesh: And make that burden light, which aforetime seemed insupportable. Let my flesh rejoyce in the living God, and my spirit exult in God its Saviour. *How good*

good and loving is the GOD of Israel unto such as are of an upright heart? I will love thee, O Lord, my strength, my strong rock and my refuge^s. I will also love holy Poverty, Humility, and Patience, following thy footsteps, and those of thy Saints. I will henceforth esteem Poverty as riches, Humility as glory, Patience as rest. Let these be my concern, and the things of the Spirit be my pleasure, because *the flesh profiteth nothing*^h. Let me be delighted in these as in all manner of abundance, and let not the foot of the proud rich ones, nor of the voluptuous livers, move me. For they themselves shall fall, when their day is come, and their end shall be without honour. But *I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the GOD of my Salvation*ⁱ: Who was made for me a pattern of Poverty, Humility, and Patience.

^f Psal. lxxiii. 1. ^g Psal. xviii. 1. ^h John vi. 63.

ⁱ Hab. iii. 18.

CHAP. II.

Of the three Tabernacles of Christ, Moses, and Elias: Or of the three Virtues, Humility, Patience, and Poverty.

I. **C**ONSIDERING therefore the foresaid Virtues, in thy self, Lord, and in certain of thy servants, I find thee, the humblest of all things; thy servant *Moses*, very meek, and *Elias*, exceeding poor: I call to mind also that these appeared once with thee upon the Mount, and how *Peter* said: *Lord, if thou wilt, let us make here three Tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias*. According to which pattern, I look upon the fore-mentioned Virtues as three Tabernacles or Tents, wherein I have a desire to dwell. If I should say, that my Lord dwelt in the Tabernacle of Humility, what thing more fit or true? *Learn* (sayst thou) *of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*^b. Thus, Lord, thy Tabernacle is Humility, wherein the Holy Spirit truly resteth. Whence it is written: *Upon whom shall I rest, but*

^a Matth. xvii. 4.

^b Matth. xi. 29.

upon him that is of an humble and quiet spirit, and that trembleth at my word? And for *Moses*, what Tabernacle had he? If I consider his meekness, doubtless it would be found to have been Patience. For *the Man Moses* (as the Scripture testifieth) *was the meekest of all the Men which were upon the face of the earth*^d. Now cometh *Elias*: But let us go and see where he dwelt. Now if I consider his Poverty and abstinence, *Poverty* no doubt will make answer, I must have the honour of him. That great Prophet *Elias* dwelt in the Tabernacle of Poverty. Witness the ravens that fed him: The cave in which he was lodg'd: The courteseness of the garment that covered him: And the Angel of the Lord that ministred unto him bread baked on the coals, and water.

II. *How good is it for us to be here^e, and how pleasant to dwell in these Tabernacles? O that I could^f obtain to be number'd among the least of thy Saints, and to find a place in thy house: That when I fail, I may be received into everlasting habitations^g!* How happy also should I be,

^e Isai. lxvii. 1, 2. ^d Numb. xii. 3. ^e Matth. xvii. 4.

^f In the Original: *Merit to be numbred.* ^g Luke xvi. 9.

if amidst these most precious Tabernacles. I might be allowed to build my self tho' never so small a one: That so my Lord God might vouchsafe to come unto me, and make his abode with me! For I know that in these Virtues the Lord and King of Virtues loveth to dwell. Now therefore speak Lord unto thy servant, for thy servant heareth; and, after the multitude of thy mercy, cause me to understand the holiness of *Poverty*, the Grace of *Humility*, and the fortitude of *Patience*.

CHAP. III.

A Commendation of Religious Poverty.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **B**Eing thou seekest to be comforted in my Words, and desirest to be instructed in these three Virtues, I will willingly do what thou cravest.

II. But my discourse must begin with *Poverty*, which seemeth to be the entrance to the other two. And I wish the love of this blessed *Poverty*, which I esteem as one of the principal ingredients of Sanctity, were
more

more deeply engraven in thy heart. For I have heard thy groanings, and with what heaviness and disquietude of Spirit thou bearest thy Poverty; but I am displeased with thee. For this is not a good thing, which I hear of thee.

III. Is it not that which I my self made choice of? Is it not one of my sealed treasures? Arise, and go with the Shepherds *even unto Bethlehem^a*; and see *the Word which was made Flesh, which the Lord hath made known unto thee^b*, and consider whether there was lack of Poverty there. Behold my Poverty, and in comparison thereof thy own Poverty will appear very inconsiderable or none at all. A mighty distance, a great gulph verily is fix'd between my Poverty and thine. For I, *tho' I was rich*, and wanted nothing, was not ashamed *to become poor*, and an Exile in this world, and that *for thy sake^c*. But thou that art poor and naked, who broughtest nothing into this world, oughtest thou not to have considered this? Cease now thy complaints; I believe it sufficient to thy consolation, only seriously to ponder the greatness of my Poverty. As for feasting

^a Luke ii. 15.

^b John i. 14.

^c 2 Cor. viii.

and

and rejoicing, this is not the place for it, but the next World. For there the poor shall eat, and be satisfied, and all shall praise me, who diligently fought me in holy Poverty. It is not for the Servants of God to rejoice in the good things that are present, and to be conformed to the pomps and vanities of the World, but despising the delights thereof, to have recourse to the sweets of my Poverty. For my Poverty and Humility are sweet and delicious to those hearts, which make no account of, and find no gust nor relish in earthly riches. Wouldst thou with the rich man be cloathed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day^d? Take care it be not thy fortune also to be tormented with him eternally in Hell. For this is an Ordination of my Justice, that their Works follow them.

IV. *One thing is yet lacking^e*, that thou bear thy present want patiently; otherwise thou shalt not be of the number of my poor. I have shewn a beautiful way to the poor, to those that labour and knock I have open'd a Gate: To the humble I have set open the Door of a Kingdom, and the rich shall not pass through it. Wouldst thou see him that

^d Luke xvi. 19.

^e Mark x. 21.

entereth?

entereth? Open thine eyes, and behold.
*And it came to pass that the beggar died,
and was carried by the Angels into Abra-
ham's bosom. Is not this a pleasant Vision?*

THE DISCIPLE.

Pleasant indeed, and exceeding desirable.
And how could he ascend up thither? And
who is the Man that may follow him?

JESUS-CHRIST.

Remember, Son, that that *Lazarus* was
full of sores and miseries, who hungry and
thirsty lay before the gates of the rich man.
And was it not meet, that one, who suffered
so great things for my Name's sake, should
enter into my joy? Imitate him, if thou see
fit. For if his soul was acceptable and well-
pleasing unto me, how could this be, but
because his Poverty and Patience pleased
me first? *Go, and do thou likewise.* Ve-
rily I say unto thee, unless thou art convert-
ed, and become like unto *Lazarus*, or as
one of my poor ones, thou shalt in no wise
be taken up by the Angels and carried to
Heaven. None shall enter, unless he be
clean. And if he be unclean, my Father
shall purge him in the Crucible of Poverty,
and the water of Temptation shall purifie
him,

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him, and being thus cleansed, he shall after death enter the Mansions of the Saints.

V. Comprehendest thou these Truths?

THE DISCIPLE.

Yea, Lord.

JESUS-CHRIST.

And now what shall I say? The hour is coming, and now is, that many shall not receive this sound doctrine; but every one seek rather, what is pleasing and delightful to him. But thou hast not so learnt *Jesus Christ*, whose Poverty is set before thine eyes as a pattern to thee. Yet hear again what I shall say unto thee. My familiar friend and acquaintance Poverty, which, when I was upon earth, I singularly loved and embraced, and meant to recommend to my friends; is become such a stranger and so odious to many, that there is scarce a place for the sole of her foot to rest on: And if perchance she seem now and then to sojourn with some persons, no sooner do they observe her to love mean and abject things, but they are seiz'd with a certain terror, and from a desire of better fare, cry out: Depart from us, we will hearken to none of thy counsels: For thou art the reverse
of

of our desires; thy ways are ways of difficulty, and thy paths full of ruggedness. Why art thou come to us? What, to slay us and our cattel? The flesh they call their cattel.

VI. Behold, O Poverty, what these say, and how much they detract from thee. Yet know I well, that thou never meantest them any evil, but wert sent by me unto those sinners, to cure their wounds, and to improve their Virtues if they had any. The Holy Prophet had far different sentiments, when he said: *Thou, O God, hast of thy goodness prepared for the poor^f.* And again he sung with joy: *Because I am poor and in misery^g.* And; *the poor and needy shall rejoyce in thy Name^h.* Nevertheless, my friend Poverty, let not thine heart be troubled. For they have not rejected thee, but me: For he that despiseth thee, despiseth me: And he that receiveth thee, receiveth me. I know that thou art not beloved of all; yea, thou art chafed away by many with indignation. All things they do unto thee, because they know not me, nor of what merit thou art in my sight. But be not thou afraid, because it is I, that have chosen thee. I

^f Psal. lxxviii. 10. ^g Psal. lxxxvi. 1. ^h Psal. lxxxix. 13.

bought

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bought thee, and held thee more precious than all riches and sweeter then all manner of delights. I fought thee out from my infancy, and when I was old and gray-headed, I departed not from thee.

CHAP. IV.

A farther Commendation of Poverty from the Example of Christ.

O All ye, that pass by the way, behold and see, if there be any Poverty like unto my Poverty^a. Go forth, O ye Daughters of Sion, and behold king Solomon with the Crown wherewith his Mother crowned him^b: How she laid him in a manger, who had been always in the Kingdom of his Father: How she wrapped him in swaddling-cloaths, who spanned Heaven and Earth with his hand. Behold my rags and my clothes, which cover'd me yet an Infant; and if ye have seen any one like unto me, make it appear against me and my Poverty. Behold the sign, which I had made known unto you, which had

^a Lam. i. 12.

^b Cantic. iii. 11.

been announc'd by the Angels, the same hath appeared upon the earth^c: It hath been accomplish'd by the Virgin *Mary*, as ye have seen. How long, ye little ones, will ye hate Poverty; tho' *unto you a little one is born, unto you a little one is given*^d? But this to the rich seemeth foolishness, to the proud, ignominy: Yet to me and to my Elect is it Wisdom and Glory. Consider (I pray) other actions of mine also. I fasted forty days and forty nights, eating nothing all that while, but I was afterwards an hungred. Behold, what I have done^e. For this was a fast of my own choosing, and which I actually accomplished. Who can recompense me this abstinence? And who is there, that is ambitious to imitate me even in a low degree? Whosoever he be, he shall be of the number of my Beloved. Being wearied with my journey, I sat upon a well, and asked water of a woman of *Samaria*, and said: *Give me to drink*^f. Behold, I asked water to drink, who had been accustomed to give wine unto Men, and had changed heretofore water into wine. But my Disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat, and when

^c Luke ii. 12.

^d Isai. ix. 6.

^e Matth. iv. 2.

^f John iv. 7.

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they were returned, they said: *Master eat.* They ministred in this wise unto me, as to one in necessity, and as a proof of my Poverty, and to the end the great necessity, which I underwent for the Salvation of Men, might become manifest. And now if thou lovest me, follow me, and I will shew thee greater things than these. Lo, poor and naked, I am at last hanged upon a Cross. Throughout my whole life I seemed to have but little; but now all things are taken away, and stript and naked I am fastened to the Cross. Who is poorer than I, who am destitute of all human comfort? These things thou oughtest to write in thy heart, and soberly and seriously to meditate upon them; to the end they may inflame thee to a love of Holy Poverty. And now unto what shall I liken thee, O my Beloved Poverty? Thou art like unto Men rejoicing in the Holy Spirit, and saying: *As having nothing, and yet possessing all things^g: As poor, yet making many rich^h.* We are weak, we are despised for *Christ's* sake. *We count all things as dung, that we may win Christⁱ.*

^g 2 Cor. vi. 13, ^h 1 Cor. 4. 10. ⁱ Phil. iii. 8.

II. I speak not these things unto the rich; for they receive me not; but unto you that are poor; for ye are of my sheep. *Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you a Kingdom^k.* Ye lead here a poor life indeed, but ye shall have good things in abundance, if ye love me in your Poverty. If ye loved me, assuredly ye would rejoice, because I was sent into the world to preach the Gospel unto the poor. When I was in the world, I loved Poverty: Riches I refused, because they are not from the Father, but of the world. *For they that will be rich, fall into the snare of the Devil, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts^l, and shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven^m.* But *my Kingdom is not of this world: If my Kingdom had been of this worldⁿ, then would my servants have ministred unto me, and a great attendance have stood round me: But now is my Kingdom not from hence, but I was made a servant and minister to all. For I came not to be ministred unto, but to minister, and to give my life a ransom for many^o.* Incline therefore

^k Luke xii. 32. ^l 2 Tim. vi. 9. ^m Matth. xix. 23.

ⁿ John xviii. 36. ^o Matth. xx. 28.

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your ears, O ye poor of mine, to the words of my mouth, and learn of me: For I have gone before you in Poverty. Content yourselves with your Poverty, and account it even riches. *Rejoice in your poor estate, and be exceeding glad: For great is your reward in Heaven^P. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid^q*, because it is I that speak unto you. Act manfully, and be of good cheer, all ye that have determined to make a league with Holy Poverty. Abide with her, and I will be among you. Lament not, nor be sad, because ye have not riches, but rejoice in the Lord your God, because ye have despised them, and are become *Christ's* Poor.

III. O Holy and Excellent Poverty, with what praises shall I extol thee, by what Name shall I call thee and in what manner shall I recommend thee, to my friends? O what a wonderful Example did I shew to my Brethren who are in want for my sake, when I became poor and needy for their sakes.

^P Matth. v. 12. ^q John xiv. 27.

CHAP. V.

The Relation and Connexion that is between Poverty and Humility.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **B**UT I am still not a little afraid, that thou art a stranger in the hearts of many: Come therefore, for I will send thee to a well-known and most faithful Servant of mine. Abide with her a short space, until the time of thy Visitation is come. In the day of thy Visitation thou shalt be glorious and high-exalted; nor shalt thou then be called desolate, but my Beloved; and *thou shalt be a crown of glory, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy GOD^a.* Then shalt thou shine as the Sun in the Kingdom of my Father, and thou shalt be beautiful as the Moon in my eyes. Howbeit, in the mean time *thou must suffer many things for my name's sake, and through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of Heaven^b.* Nevertheless faint not at this, because I am

^a Isai. lxii. 3.

^b Acts ix. 16. xiv. 22.

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with thee in tribulation; I will deliver thee, and will glorify thee.

II. Set forward therefore, according to my counsel, to a place which I shall shew thee. The President of that place, I know, will willingly and gladly receive thee, for my Name's sake.

POVERTY.

Lord, whither shall I go, and how shall I find the way?

JESUS-CHRIST.

Thou shalt go by me, and shalt forthwith arrive at her Habitation. For *I am the Way*^c.

POVERTY.

And what is the name of this thy beloved Servant, of whom I hear so many good things, Lord? Tell me, that upon hearing her name I may arise, and go with haste. And when I am arriv'd, I will salute her, and say: Hail Blessed of the Lord, rejoice and be exceeding glad, Daughter of Sion, for the Lord hath sent me unto thee.

^c John xiv. 6.

JESUS-CHRIST.

III. Why, O Poverty, askest thou her name? She is of great name with me, and very illustrious in the eyes of my Servants. She is called *Humility*. Her Sanctity and Virtue is venerable amongst Angels and Men. Behold, O Poverty, behold this is she, of whom I spake unto thee. As I have loved thee from the beginning, so I also love her. Be thou the keeper and guardian of this Humility, which I principally love in my Saints. I will not that thou desert her: For if thou wouldest rightly consider, thou wilt find none liker unto thee in all the earth, and with whom thou mayst longer and more securely abide. All abandon thee, all despise thee, but true Humility admitteth thee into her house: For ye are nearly related, and therefore ye ought to live together. Unblest is that Poverty, which knoweth not Humility: Nor is that Humility, which despiseth Poverty, pleasing unto GOD. Let there therefore be but one heart and soul in you, and let all things be in common between you. To be ashamed of a mean habit, is a mark of a lurking Pride: But to seek glory from thence, is Vanity, and the Sin of Hypocrisy. Thy

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shoes are old and patch'd; but Humility is not ashamed to walk in them, because many of the Saints have gone barefoot. Whence we read in the Prophet *Isaiah*, that the Lord said unto him: *Go, and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot: and he did so, walking naked and barefoot*^d. Behold an undoubted testimony of this truth. Thy table, most excellent Poverty, is content with simple, and only necessary viands: Humility also is gladly present, for my sake, at this banquet of Sobriety.

POVERTY.

I know how to abound, and to suffer need: Every where, and in all things I am instructed, both to be full, and to be hungry. I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me^e.

JESUS-CHRIST.

IV. Nevertheless whosoever readeth these words, ought withal to consider, that Poverty knoweth how kindly to condescend and accommodate her self to the weak and feeble: But she proposeth these difficulties and

^d *Isai. xx. 2.*

^e *Phil. iv. 12.*

heights to the strong, to the end they may have always wherewithal to increase and grow in virtue. Hence is it, that she is often in weariness and painfulness, nor doth she eat her bread in idleness, that she may be able to fulfil the words of the Apostle, who saith: *I was chargeable to no man. I have laboured day and night: I have not eat my bread in idleness.* And thus Humility labouring with Poverty complaineth of a certain sort of people by the mouth of the Prophet: *They are in no distress like other folk: neither are they chastised like other men.* And this is the cause that they are so holden with pride^g. And in the Gospel, when she saw others in the Market standing idle, she rebukes them, saying: *Why stand ye here all the day idle? Go ye into my Vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that will I give you^h.* She hath also read, that *John had his raiment of Camels hairⁱ.* And she hath heard of me: *Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head^k.* Poverty hath neither Man servants, nor Maid-servants,

^f 2 Cor. xi. 9.

ⁱ Matth. iii. 4.

^g Psal. lxxiii. 5. 6.

^k Luke ix. 58.

^h Matth. xx. 7.

neither

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neither houses, nor lands, nor any of those things that contribute to the convenience and pleasure of life: Otherwise she would forfeit her venerable name. Humility likewise is as ill provided, and neither hath these things, nor coveteth them; but desiring to be conform'd to the Son of God, she saith: I am one, who came to minister, and not to be ministred unto. I am the Hand-maid of *Christ*; it is not for me to rule or command: The height of my ambition is, to approve my service to *Jesus Christ*. What affection can I possibly have for these vain and perishing things, who have determined to serve only the Creator of all things? Far from me, and from my Habitation be every one, that loveth not Poverty and Simplicity.

CHAP. VI.

The Consolation of Poverty.

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **K** NOW then, well-beloved Poverty, that Humility will receive thee with joy. To all others thou art unknown; and so art like to continue; be not troubled. Remember that I my self also was a stranger to many. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute thee. If they hated me, they will also hate thee. Remember my word, which I said: *The servant is not greater than his Lord*. In Humility and Patience, thy strength and consolation will consist.

POVERTY.

Behold thy Handmaid, be it unto me according to thy will. Thou hast spoken unto thy Servant; and whence is this to me, that I should find so much Grace in thine Eyes! How abundant art thou in thy Mercies, to visit the Stranger, to bless the Widow, and not to forsake the desolate!

^a John xiii. 1.

II. My heart for joy cannot contain it self, that so great a Majesty should not disdain to cast an eye upon my misery ; so great a height, to enquire after an humbled, under-troden creature ; so infinitely powerful and opulent a King, to love a poor destitute afflicted wretch ! And what else is this, but the riches of his Goodness, the bowels of his Compassion, and the unspeakable sweetness of his Charity ? It had been a great thing, if he had vouchsafed to remember me so far, as to have sent unto me one of the meanest of his Servants. But now he himself hath risen up from his Throne in Heaven, exchanged his royal Power for Poverty, and hath been found in fashion as a poor Man ; putting on the form even of a servant ; and not only of a servant, but of the very vilest of servants ; that for us he might be delivered up to Death and be crucified, who had done nothing worthy of Death, neither was guile found in his mouth. In all things he was made like unto me, in age, in habit, in relation ; for he became a poor helpless Infant ; and had made choice not of rich, but poor Parents. Great therefore is my boasting and rejoicing, much my confidence and consolation in *Christ Jesus*. *Comfort ye,*

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ye, comfort ye my people, saith your Lord God^b. Who are the People of the Lord, but his Poor? The rich ones of the world are not the People of God.

III. For wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation^c. Wherefore Jesus hath said: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven^d. Whether this be understood of real or spiritual Poverty, certain it is that voluntary Poverty is in every one lovely and praise-worthy.

JESUS-CHRIST.

Take heed therefore that ye despise not one of these little ones^e, that believe in me, and are become poor for my Name's sake. For I, saith the Lord God, am the father of the poor, and defend the cause of the orphans and widows^f. I have heard the desire of the poor, I prepare their heart, and mine ear hearkeneth thereunto^g. Touch them not, neither hurt them by force or fraud. I am the avenger of all. Wherefore grieve them not, nor afflict them, for they are all under my protection. And now

^b Isai. xl. 1.

^c Luke vi. 24.

^d Matth. v. 3.

^e Matth. xviii. 10.

^f Psal. lxxviii. Isai. ix.

^g Psal. x. 19.

where

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where are ye, ye Poor of my People? Have ye not heard my Voice? Behold what testimonies I have produc'd for you, to the end my beloved Poverty might become acceptable and pleasing to you.

IV. I call her my Beloved, because by my own act and example I have render'd her most precious: That all Kings and Princes of the Earth may learn not to despise her, but to cherish and revere her, as being in truth most valuable; since the King of Heaven and Earth, even the King of Kings, consecrated her in his Holy Infancy. If ye believe not my words, believe my works. Go then, and see the place where the Lord was laid, whether in the Manger, or in the Sepulchre. Am not I *Christ Jesus*? Feel therefore and see, that I have no riches nor pleasures, but only rags and a napkin. Believe now, that I am not rich, and love my Poverty. And so much may suffice for the Praise of Poverty, which is truly laudable, and ought to be much lov'd by all the Servants of God; because God, and all the Saints prefer'd it before all the Riches of the World.

OF THE
Second Tabernacle :
 THAT IS,
 OF HUMILITY.

CHAP. I.

*Of the Lessons and Examples of Humility
 delivered by Christ.*

THE DISCIPLE.

I.  UT let us pass next to the Virtue
 of Humility. For unless Humi-
 lity go along with Poverty, Po-
 verty can never be acceptable
 and well-pleasing unto GOD. Wherefore as
 thou hast spoken of Poverty, so speak unto
 me, my Lord GOD, of Humility also. I
 observe this Grace to be often and power-
 fully recommended in thy Scriptures ; and
 find it to have shone in thee eminently and
 remark-

remarkably above all other virtues. Who could so effectually shew forth and teach true Humility, as God made Man? Wherefore thou sayst plainly and expressly to all: *Learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart*^a. And if I had no other Example of true Humility, but thee my Lord *Jesus*; nor any other cause of humiliation; thou alone wouldst be abundantly sufficient. Whom should I follow, if I follow not thee? Whom should I believe, if I believe not thee? Who will be able to persuade me, that Humility is the way to the Kingdom of Heaven; if he cannot, who came down from Heaven? How long wilt thou be without knowledge, O my soul, walking through ways that are not right, always straying and never arriving at the Truth?

II. Lo, Humility is the way, and there is no other. *I* (saith he) *am the way, and the Truth, and the Life*^b. Humble thy self, bow down thy self, O my soul, and *Christ* shall be thy life. Hearken not to what others say; but attend to what *Christ* saith unto Men: *Fear not, little flock: For it is my Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom*^c. Hence again in ano-

^a Matth. xi. 29. ^b John xiv. 6. ^c Luke xii. 32.

ther place also exulting in the Holy Spirit he saith unto his Father: *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight*^d. What think you of Christ? Whose Son is he? Of a truth that Man was the Son of God. If he would possess nothing in the world, he who created all things together with the Father; why seekest thou still and lovest any thing therein? Dread that saying of his: *Ye are of the world.* When Jesus was yet with his Disciples, and the hour of his Passion drew nigh, being willing to give them an Example of perfect Humility, and mutual love: *He riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments, and poureth water into a bason, and began to wash his Disciples feet. And he saith unto them: Know ye, what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: And ye say well; for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one anothers feet. For I have given you an Example, that ye*

^d Matth. xi, 25, 26.

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should do as I have done to you. O unexampled Humility; Behold, GOD is become a servant to Men, and yet Man is not subject to Man, or rather to GOD. Let all the Proud be confounded and tremble, because they have despised the counsel of the Son of GOD.

THE DISCIPLE.

III. Thou hast conquer'd us Lord, *Jesus*, thou hast conquer'd us with thy Humility; behold we are confounded in our pride. Confusion hath cover'd our face.

JESUS-CHRIST.

What could I have done more for thee, O Man of Pride, that I have not done? Why lookest thou upon me? Thinkest thou that thou art better than I? If thou hadst not thought thus, peradventure thou hadst humbled thy self; but now thy pride encreaseth evermore. Turn ye, ye^s Sons of Men, and ascend not, for I am not with you. For if ye ascend, ye shall fall before your enemies, and they shall laugh you to scorn; and ye shall know, that I resist the proud. Humble your selves under my mighty hand, and I will exalt you. *For whoſoever humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted;*

alted^f; and he that exalteth himself, shall be abased^e. How many have attempted to ascend, and have sunk into the bottom as a stone? *Pharaoh* and his chariots were drowned in the Red Sea^g. *Adam* and *Eve* were expell'd Paradise^h. An Angel, and his Associates, were cast headlong out of Heaven. And all these, for ascending the Mount of Pride, were thrown down, and doom'd to an eternal death.

THE DISCIPLE.

Ah! Lord, who can support the weight of thy fury and indignation? Thou hast cast them down, whilst they were lifting up themselves. *Babylon* is fallen, *Babylon* is fallen, and great was the ruin thereof. But what shall I do wretch? whither shall I flee? I am seized with fear and trembling, because God hath spared the pride neither of Men nor Angels. Wo to me, if I thus ascend; and again wo unto me, if I descend not. Who will show me a way, which I may walk securely, and without danger?

^e 1 Pet. v. 6.

^f Luke xiv. 11.

^g Exod. xv. 4, 5.

^h Gen. iii.

JESUS-CHRIST.

IV. *I am the way: By me if any Man enter in, he shall be savedⁱ. Come unto me, all ye that be desirous of me^k, and ye shall not be offended in me, as it befalleth the Proud. I am the light of the world. He that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life^l. I am the pattern of righteoulness: I am the model of Humility. I am the good shepherd^m, who feed my sheep. I have fed them in the innocency of my heart, and in the words of my mouth have I strengthened and comforted them.*

THE DISCIPLE.

O Lord, who feedest me from my youth up, forsake me not. *Let thy loving spirit lead me forth into the land of uprightness: For thy Name's sake, quicken me in thy Humilityⁿ. It is that which shall save my soul, and defend it from eternal pains. If I am humble, I shall be saved. Lord remember me^o, faith the humble and contrite thief, when thou comest into*

ⁱ John x. 9. ^k Eccles. xxiv. 19. ^l John viii. 12.
^m John x. 14. ⁿ Psal. cxlii. 10, 11. ^o Luke xxiii. 42, 43.

thy Kingdom. And Jesus said unto him; verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. O how great is the force of Humility, which opened unto a thief the joys of Paradise; Who is like unto the Lord our God, that bath his dwelling so high: And yet humbleth himself to behold the things that are in Heaven and Earth? Who taketh up the simple out of the dust: And lifteth the poor out of the mire^P. Be mindful of us in our Humility; and defend thy little ones, and humble the sinners even unto the dust.

CHAP. II.

Of the Manners and Actions of the truly Humble; also of the Marks and Properties of the Proud.

THE DISCIPLE.

I. **B**UT now, Lord, I would willingly learn of thee the carriage and behaviour of the Humble Man; what his thoughts are; and what the signs and proofs of his holiness.

JESUS-CHRIST.

Behold, the humble Man evermore seeketh the lowermost place, as it is written; *when thou art bidden of any Man to a wedding, go and sit down in the lowest room^a.* Yet he doth not this through affectation or hypocrisie, but is persuaded that the lowest place is verily and indeed his due. Otherwise he would have no glory nor reward with his Father, which is in Heaven, which seeth all things in secret.

II. If he be censured or defam'd by others, he beareth it patiently, and is humbly silent.

III. He revolveth in his thoughts, how great reproaches the Saviour of the world bore. For the *Jews* said of the Son of GOD; *He hath a Devil, and seduceth the multitudes. He is a glutton and winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners^b.*

IV. The humble Man comforteth himself with these words, and saith: *The servant is not above his Lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*

^a Luke xiv, 8, 10. ^b Luke vii. ^c Matth. x.

THE DISCIPLE.

I will follow my Lord *Jesus*; because he himself hath said: *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross daily, and follow me^d.* Be not troubled, O my soul, because Thou receivest the due reward of thy deeds: But *Jesus* did nothing amiss; nor did any thing worthy of death: And yet *he humbled himself unto the death of the Cross^e: For if they did these things in a green Tree,* which was in the Paradise of GOD: *What shall be done in the dry^f,* which thou art? And therefore I complain unjustly; but I suffer justly, how often soever, and by whom soever I am reproach'd.

JESUS-CHRIST.

If the humble Man be rebuked or accused, he seeketh not excuses, or justifications of himself; but sheweth all lowliness of heart, confesseth the fault, and promiseth amendment. Why this? Because he seeketh not to please Men, but to satisfy GOD. He little valueth the shame of Men, because he feareth the Divine Judgment, where all

^d Luke ix. 23.

^e Phil. ii.

^f Luke xxiii. 31.

things shall be made manifest. Whosoever now humbly confesseth his faults, shall there obtain of me the remission of his Sins.

V. Therefore the humble Man always saith, whether justly or unjustly blamed : *I have sinned, and done evil in thy sight^g. I am ready prepared to receive chastisement, and my grief is ever before me. I will confess my wickedness, and be sorry for my sin^h.* He feelth the sting of Sin within, and therefore more easily beareth whatsoever girdeth from without. For this is an argument of great Humility, when a man is reprov'd, to acknowledge and confess his fault. On the contrary, some act proudly in excusing and justifying themselves before others. I did not (saith the pride of some) do this; or if I did it, I did well in doing it. If it was ill done, yet not very ill: Nor to the degree of what those people give out. Who is that Man, that dares say such things of me? Nevertheless, such persons sometimes own publickly the crimes they have committed; saying, I was in such or such a place, and such things I did; these things I said, and thus I answer'd. What an unaccountable wretched-

^g Psal. li. 4.

^h Psal. xxxviii. 17, 18.

ness and blindness is it, to declare with his own mouth that he hath done ill, and yet not to bear to be reputed a sinner by others? *O ye sons of men, how long will ye have such pleasure in vanity, and seek after leasing?* If the humble Man be asked a question, he doth not appear forward to answer, but is slow and considerate. Furthermore, he is not prone to laughter, but is temper'd with gravity. His heart is easily touch'd with the impressions of devotion, because he seeketh no temporal joy or consolation. He is given to compunction, and is ever foremost in the duty of self-consideration. He is always ready to deplore his own weaknesses and miscarriages, to consider with joy the good qualities and virtues of others, to bear their infirmities, and with tenderness to excuse their defects.

VI. As to the great and sublime things of the present life, honours and dignities, high stations, and Benefices, these he hath no concern about, but considereth all things as perishing and vain. *For when a man dieth, he shall carry nothing away with him: neither shall his pomp follow him^a.* And

^a Psal. xlix. 17.

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where (saith he) are those, that flourished in this world? As a stranger and *guest that tarrieth but a night*^b, so are they passed away. He despiseth therefore all worldly honours, he embraceth reproaches and abasements. *He had rather be an abject in the house of his GOD, than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness*^c. He taketh up the light yoke of *Christ*, he casteth away the laborious servitude of the Devil. Nothing more laborious, nothing more anxious, than to endeavour to ascend, and that in vain; for the proud man is in minutely fear, lest he should be foiled; and he is daily cast down, yea, tho' himself know nothing of it. But peace and joy is with the humble man, who walketh in the plain way of the Saints, and dwelleth in the vallies. For *the vallies shall stand thick with corn*^d, that is, shall abound in the consolations of the Holy Spirit: *They shall laugh and sing* for the gracious gifts which they have received. Wherefore he seeketh nothing of all the things that are upon earth, because his whole hope is above, and fix'd upon the things of Heaven. He crieth out with the Prophet, and saith: *Thou art my hope,*

^b Wisd. v. 14.

^c Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

^d Psal. lxxv. 14.

*O Lord, even from my mother's womb, my portion in the land of the living^e. Whom have I in Heaven but thee: and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee! GOD is the strength of my hope, and my portion for ever^f. He desireth to be subject; he is ready to obey others for my Name's sake. For he remembreth the Scripture, where it saith: *The Child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his Mother knew not of it^g*. Where it followeth soon after: *And he went down with them, and was subject to them*. And again: *I am among you, as he that serveth^h*. And the Prophet saith unto himself: *Nevertheless, my soul, wait thou still upon, and be subject unto GOD: for he truly is my strength and my salvationⁱ*. The love of subjection, of contempt, and disreputation among Men, is familiar unto the humble. And where may such be found?*

THE DISCIPLE.

VII. My Lord, thou canst tell. Known unto thee is all the Congregation of the Saints, because thou art the Inhabitant of

^e Psal. xxii. 10. ^f Psal. lxxiii. 24, 25. ^g Luke ii. 43, 51.

^h Luke xxii. 27.

ⁱ Psal. lxii. 5, 6.

humble

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humble Spirits. I am not of them; but have mercy upon me, and spare my sins, that place of repentance may be granted me, at least ^k for the sake of their righteousness. Let them rejoice, who are such, because they have found great Grace with thee. Behold there cometh to my remembrance, that most eminent, and holiest of all Saints, the Mother of GOD, the Virgin *Mary*, unto whom the Angel saith; *Fear not Mary, for thou hast found Grace with GOD*^l. And why find not I Grace in thine eyes?

JESUS-CHRIST.

Because thou art not yet become little in thine own eyes. Pride is the grand obstacle, and insuperable bar to Grace. First cast out this beam from out thine eye, and then thou shalt see what I will do for my humble servant. When have I denied Grace to the humble? And when have I refused to hearken to the Prayer of the poor? Hear the Prophet: *Lo, the poor crieth, and the Lord heareth him: yea, and saveth him out of all his troubles*^m. *The Lord turn-*

^k In the Latin; *For the sake of their Merits.*

^l Luke i. 30.

^m Psal. xxxiv. 6.

*eth him unto the prayer of the humble : and despiseth not their desire*ⁿ. Many approach unto me with a high and lofty heart, and I hearken not unto them. They beg, not to be healed of their Sins, but to appear holy unto Men. They wish for devotion, but they are unwilling to suffer shame and confusion with me: They earnestly desire Humility, but they are loth to be despised of Men with the humble. Thus they seek to love the virtues without the hatred of the opposite vices, and are disappointed in their desire. But he that would enjoy the sweets of Virtue, must extirpate Vice, and root out of his heart the briars and thorns of his passions. But the humble man endeavoureth evermore to suppress and beat down all elevation and swelling of heart, and hateth preheminance and superiority over others ; which is a great iniquity. For this made Angels Devils, and rendreth Men Sinners ; because every one that exalteth his own heart, is an abomination unto the Lord.

VIII. *Wo unto you that are great in your own eyes, and wise in your own imaginations*^o. *For the day of the Lord of Hosts*

ⁿ Psal. cii, 17.

^o Isai. v, 21.

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shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low^p. Wo unto you that believe every thing high to be holy; and say unto every lofty thing, *It is the Honour of God, and the Glory of God*. And why deceive ye your own hearts? *Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi*^q. Lower your high thoughts, and bow down your rebellious necks. Which if ye do not do, I will rise up in opposition to you, and will summon Heaven, and Earth, and all the Elements against you, and the whole World shall join battel with me against the senseless and the proud. And your height shall be bowed down, and your loftiness shall be troden under foot, and the glorious of the earth shall be covered with confusion. Behold all chastisements ready to overwhelm the haughty. The rod and the staff, weeping and wailing, upon every soul that is arrogant. Overthrow and defeat, ignominy and confusion, upon every soul that presumeth. Wherefore *set not up your horn on high: and speak not with a stiff neck*^r; but empty your selves even unto the foundation.

^p Isai. ii. 12.

^q Numb. xvi. 7.

^r Psal. lxxv. 6.

The Foundation is Humility; and other foundation can none lay, besides that which is laid, which is *Jesus Christ*.

IX. Our design was to speak concerning the humble; but the pride of Satan interrupted the discourse. For almost all Men are forward to ascend; but slow and backward to descend; greedy of honours, and eager of dignities and promotions. They presume great things of themselves, and are high and lofty in their imaginations. These evils are to be shunn'd, and to be cast away forthwith from out the heart of *Christ's* Poor.

*Other Marks and Properties of the
Humble Man.*

It is a very commendable thing also in the humble Man, the care he taketh to avoid the noise and bustle of the world, and to retire into himself: He is unwilling to appear abroad, and loveth to be hid (like a dead man) from the eyes of men. He setteth himself to imitate the examples of Humility that the Saints have left behind them: His thoughts are taken up with the consideration of his own frailty, and with the remembrance of the Humble *Jesus* conversing

versing amongst Men. He findeth great cause of humbling himself; and seeketh copious matter of devout meditation both by day and night.

X. Therefore he readeth in the holy Scriptures, and considereth how far short he is of the virtues of the Saints. He admireth their exercises, labours, temptations, abstinences: He pondereth their transcendent Humility, their invincible Patience, their perfect Obedience, and absolute Self-denial and Mortification as to all wordly things. Wherefore he lamenteth bitterly, and sorroweth exceedingly, that he hath not the like zeal and fervency, nor taketh the same pains to acquire their virtues. Ah Dust and Sin! For what else (saith he) are we? Ah Flesh and Blood, wherein our souls lie envelop'd! Earth is our country; earthly our thoughts; earthly our conversation; heaping up of trash the business of our Life. In eating and drinking, in sleeping and idling, most of our time passeth away. O how degenerated are we, who have scarce the least relick of the virtues of the Saints! And yet we are still proud, and seek not to walk in the way of Humility. We are still cold and lukewarm towards that which is good, and grow old in that which is evil,
and

and yet would fain be esteemed and thought something by others. For such sentiments as these are far from entring the humble heart, which thinketh it self nothing, and continually burneth with a desire of growing and increasing in Virtue. He hath considered himself, and is gone away in haste, in the bitterness of his Soul, and hath enter'd his chamber, that he may weep there^f. Afterwards he ariseth and readeth in the Apostle *Paul* the thoughts he had of himself: *I (saith he) am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of GOD*. And in the Gospel concerning the Blessed Virgin: *GOD hath regarded the lowliness of his Hand-maiden*^u. And again in the Prophet: *I put on sackcloth, and humbled my soul with fasting*^w. And with *Abraham*: *I will speak unto my Lord, which am but dust and ashes*^x. All these things true Humility, which is the mother and guardian of all virtues, worketh in the hearts of the Elect.

XI. Arise now, and meeting her, say unto her: Welcome my Mistres Humility,

^f Gen. xliii. 30.

ⁱ 1 Cor. xv. 9.

^u Luke i. 48.

^w Plal. xxxv. 13.

^x Gen. xviii. 27.

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enter into me, O thou darling Virtue of *Christ*, thou Parent of Grace, and singulâr Boast and Glory of the Virgin *Mary*. Come unto me, O thou Regainer of forfeited Paradise, thou Restorer of the whole race of lost Mankind. By thee the Heavens were opened, and by thee the Gates of Hell broken down. By thee we were raised again, and stood upright, and by thee brought back to our native country. Thou of sinners makest Men just, and being justified raisest them to be the companions of Angels. Thou calledst down *Christ* from Heaven, and exaltedst *Mary* above the Choirs of Angels. GOD, tho' he be rich in Grace, yet conferreth Grace upon none but the humble. And because this Virtue above all others abounded in *Mary*, therefore was she also full of Grace.

XII. It now evidently appeareth, that Humility is, and ever was, the soveraign Virtue of all the Saints. She alone meriteth, what transcendeth all merits: She alone obtaineth, what the tongues of Angels cannot expresse. She knoweth no fall, because she never presumeth great things of her self. Whoso possesseth her, whoso loveth and keepeth her, shall lay him down, and repose his Soul in the Peace of *Christ*; even as
Christ

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*Christ hath promised unto the humble:
Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in
heart: and ye shall find rest unto your
souls^y.*

y Matth. xi. 29.

OF THE

Third Tabernacle :

THAT IS,

OF PATIENCE.

CHAP. I.

*Of the Necessity of Patience amidst the
numerous Miseries of this Life.*

THE DISCIPLE.

I.  INCE, Lord, thou hast vouchsafed to deliver certain Precepts touching Holy Poverty and Humility, it remaineth now, pursuant to thy promise, to suggest something unto thy Servant, concerning the admirable Virtue of Patience. For I acknowledge and confess this before thee, that I am very deficient in this virtue, and that I have great need of much Patience. For what is my life,

life, but one long continued Misery, from the day of my nativity even unto the day of my burial? And there is no vacancy, no intermission between, from labour and sorrow. And how came I into this miserable estate, O my GOD! Thou knowest right well, what, and how great evils compass me about, during my imprisonment in the Body: And there is none that so well knoweth the misery of Man, as thou, O Lord our GOD. Thou seest therefore, how necessary Patience is for me. *How happeneth it, O my Soul, that thou art in thine enemies land? For if thou hadst walked in the way of GOD, thou shouldst have dwelled in peace for ever^a. But thou hast forsaken the Lord thy GOD, the Fountain of living waters, and hewn thee out cisterns, broken cisterns that could hold no water^b, and therefore thou art delivered into the hands of those that hate thee.*

II. But return unto me, saith the Lord, and I will receive thee. For my sins, all these things, O Lord, by thy just judgment are come upon me. I have sinned with my fathers, and bear *the heavy yoke upon all the sons of Adam^c*, for his children are all

^a Baruch iii. 10, 13.

^b Jer. ii. 13.

^c Eccclus. xl. 1.

of them the children of wrath. Howbeit, unless thy help had succoured us from above, *we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah^d*, which were destroy'd in a moment. And therefore *it is of the multitude of thy mercies, O Lord, that we are not consumed: and because thy compassions fail not^e*, that we are yet alive. We were all the children of death, but thou preventedst us with thy mercies, and not as our offence, so was thy judgment, but thy mercy hath superabounded above all our iniquity. *Thou remembrest that we are dust; that the days of man are but as grass: that he flourisheth as a flower of the field^f*. These things have I presumed to utter before thee, O God, and Father of Mercies, to the end I might be sensible of my own misery, and be assured withal, that thy righteous judgment is the cause of all the evils we labour under. But nevertheless still I ask, if in all these there be any consolation in *Christ Jesus* our Lord. And if I deserve not to be fully comforted, grant it at least in some degree. Who therefore shall comfort my Soul? *Trouble and heaviness have taken*

^d *Iſai. i. 9.*^e *Lam. iii. 22.*^f *Pſal. ciii. 14, 15.*

hold upon me: Quicken me according to thy loving-kindness^g.

III. O best of Comforters, thrice-welcome Guest, and sweetest refreshment of the afflicted Soul: Who fillest all things living with thy blessing: Open thine hand, and pour down the dew of thy Heavenly Benediction upon my dry and parch'd Earth. *I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul gaspeth unto thee as a thirsty land. Hear me, O Lord, and that soon, for my spirit waxeth faint^h.* And whither shall I go without thee? And to whom shall I flee? Thou, O Lord, art my GOD; and therefore receive propitiously my Prayers. Unto thee have I lifted up my Soul; do not thou despise me. I have shewed my misery; do not thou turn away thine eyes. I have sinned; do not thou condemn me. *My heart hath said unto thee, thy face, Lord, will I seek, O do not forsake me.* For thou hast said with thine own mouth, being desirous to comfort us: *Come unto me, all that travel, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh youⁱ:* And again: *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink^k.*

^g Psal. cxix.

ⁱ Mat th. xi. 28.

^h Psal. cxliii. 6, 7.

^k John vii. 37.

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My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh also longeth after thee^l. My habitation, O Lord, is in a pathless desert, *where no water is*. Lord, *Thou hast given me a dry land, give me also springs of water* from above^m. For my misery is not light, where-with I am afflicted in this life of mine. For which way soever I turn my self, I find labours and sorrows. And therefore I pray thee, be not angry with me; for *my spirit is vexed within me*ⁿ, and my words are full, not of murmuring, but grief. I have poured out my prayer in thy sight, and set forth my tribulation before thee. For to the miserable it is a consolation often, to reveal his misery to a friend: And a swelling wound, in opening, paineth less, and is the sooner cured. Unto thee therefore have I revealed my cause, O Father of Mercies.

^l Psal. lxxiii. 2.

^m Josh. xv. 19.

ⁿ Psal. cxliiii. 4.

CHAP. II.

*The Consolation of a Soul afflicted and
groaning under Tribulation.*

JESUS-CHRIST.

I. **W**HAT wouldest thou, that I should do for thee? Be more calm and quiet, more patient and resigned, O my Son. *I have surely seen the affliction of my people, which are in Egypt; and I am come to deliver them*^a. But after I have succour'd thee, and done thee good, thou shalt be mindful of my Name, because I am thy Saviour and Redeemer. Afflict not thy self any longer, for I my self, who spake, behold, am present. Why therefore art thou consumed with grief and sorrow? Hast thou no counsellor? Remember my saying and promise to my Disciples: *I will not leave you comfortless: but I will send the promise of my Father upon you, even the Spirit of truth, that he may abide with you for ever*^b. For he it is who in their adversities comforteth the hearts of the Saints.

^a Exod. iii. 7, 8.
John xiv. 16, 17.

^b John xiv. 18. Luke xxiv. 49.

THE DISCIPLE.

This, Lord, thou saidst of thy Apostles, and Disciples, and in them thou fulfilledst thy promise: But how this should be verified with regard to me, I know not, because I was not there.

JESUS-CHRIST.

Wouldst not thou also be a Disciple of mine?

THE DISCIPLE.

Yea, Lord.

JESUS-CHRIST.

What I said unto them, I say unto all ; for I receive the great and the small. I pray'd my Father not only for them, but for those also who should believe in me through their word. For every one that will be the Disciple of *Christ*, shall be a partaker of all the good things I promised my Elect. *I have chosen them, and ordained them, that they should go and bring forth fruit in patience, and that their fruit should remain* to eternal Life^c. This I speak unto

^c John xv. 16.

thee, *that in me thou mayst have peace*^d, and possess thy soul in patience. *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you*^e. Be patient, and receive adversities cheerfully.

II. Faint not in tribulations; for tribulation is a consuming Fire. It purgeth sins; it extinguisheth presumption; it chaseth away coldness and remissness; it inspireth a sober wholsome sadness; and leadeth to an imitation of *Christ*. Wouldst thou lose these advantages?

THE DISCIPLE.

By no means, Lord.

JESUS-CHRIST.

Yet these effects true Wisdom worketh in tribulation. Wherefore seek not peace but in GOD; peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, which the world cannot give.

THE DISCIPLE.

O the peace and joy of my Lord *Jesus Christ*, what children art thou wont to make, and by what secret and manifold

^d John xvi. 33.

^e John xiv. 27.

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ways dost thou, coming from Heaven, insinuate thy self into the hearts of the Elect? O the peace and joy of the Holy Ghost, which is not given to the wicked, but is manifested to the humble, and to all the devout Servants of God! I wish thou wouldst burst the Heavens, and come down unto me, and more frequently visit my feeble infirm soul; that I might experimentally learn, that *the spirit of wisdom is a loving spirit*^f, and that *those have great peace that love thy law*^g, and taste the deliciousness of the Holy Ghost. O with what joy and gladness should I then despise all these perishing and earthly things, that I might for ever cleave unto his sweetness? How cheerfully should I take up, how patiently endure all crosses and adversities, when for love of him no weight would seem grievous unto me? And what could then delight me any longer, when he had swallowed me up?

III. O how transportingly delicious is thy Spirit, O Lord, who, to manifest thy sweetness to the Children of Grace, filledst their hungry souls with the sweetest Bread from Heaven; even with internal good

^f Wis. i. 6.

^g Psal. cxix.

things;

things; sending the fastidious rich empty away: because they are not worthy the consolation of the Holy Ghost. *All these things worketh one and the same Spirit, dividing to every Man severally as he will^h*, helping our infirmity, and comforting us in our pilgrimage, in the grand banishment whereinto we are thrown. But I know, O Lord, that *this is the third hour of the dayⁱ*, when Peter opened his mouth, and spake thy word with great boldness; when he was fill'd with new wine, which maketh glad the heart of Man; when he was anointed with the oyl of Grace and Gladness, with his fellows. This is the hour, whereof his Co-Apostle saith: *The love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us^k*; for we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of GOD^l. And he hath written saying: *Rejoice (Brethren) in the Lord always: And again I say, rejoice. For the Lord is at hand^m*. Verily he was at hand to him, who had receiv'd so great an abundance of Grace from the Lord, that he was both full himself,

^h 1 Cor. xii. 11. ⁱ Acts ii. 14, 15. ^k Rom. v. 5.

^l 1 Cor. ii. 12. ^m Phil. iv 4, 5.

and drank unto others from the abundance of his heart such manifold consolations. *Whether* (saith he) *we be besides our selves, it is to GOD: or whether we be sober, it is to you*ⁿ, all things for your sake, most dearly Beloved. This is the hour, in which the Prophet rejoiceth, saying: *And he hath put a new song into my mouth: even a thanksgiving unto our GOD*^o. *My lips shall greatly rejoice, when I sing unto thee: and so shall my soul which thou hast redeemed*^p. *My heart and my flesh shouteth aloud for the living GOD*^q. And more there have been, who have spoken excellent things of this hour, *and have tasted the good gift of GOD*^r; the power also and Grace, whereof they partook. My GOD, thou gavest them this; thou, my GOD, wert propitious unto them, and taughtest them inwardly by thy Spirit. Blessed are those servants, that have been judged worthy to be made partakers of the heavenly gifts, and to serve day and night so sweet and loving a Lord. Their life and conversation is not upon earth; but their hearts live upon the memory of eternal things. They are filled with

ⁿ 2 Cor. v. 13. ^o Psal. xl. 30. ^p Psal. lxxi. 23.
^q Psal. lxxxiv. 2. ^r Heb. vi. 5

the good things of the Lord, and I wish they would leave the relicks *for their Babes*^s; that the poor may *eat and be satisfied* with the crumbs that fall from their Masters table^t. But where is that hour, whereof again it is written: *This is your hour, and the power of darknes*^v? Lord *Jesus*, (if I well remember) these are thy words. And many other passages it delighteth me to recall to mind; because I know that for my sake all things were done and written.

CHAP. III.

An Exhortation to Patience, from the Words and Example of Jesus-Christ, and the Patriarchs.

THE DISCIPLE.

I. **S**weetest *Jesus*, where is the word of our Salvation, which thou spakest in the bitterness of thy Soul? *My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death*^a.

^s Psal. xvii. 17.

^v Luke xxii. 53.

^t Psal. xxii. 26.

^a Matth. xxvi. 38.

And

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And presently after to thy Disciples: *The hour is come; behold the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners, and shall be crucified, and killed^b. And elsewhere: Father, save me from this hour: But for this cause came I unto this hour^c; that is, dearest Saviour, that thou mayst die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not^d. For except a corn of wheat^e, which is Christ the Lord, fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. O happy and blessed hour, in which Man was redeemed from eternal death! O joyful and thrice-welcome *Heaviness*, which wiped away the perpetual sorrow of our perdition, and restored to mortals the forfeited joys of Paradise! This was the fruit, Holy *Jesus*, of thy sacred Passion, and exceeding heaviness taken upon thee for us, that thou mightest recover lost Men to an immortal life. That was an hour therefore not of joy, but of sorrow; not of consolation, but of passion; not of peace, but of affliction; inasmuch as thou saidst, O *Jesus*, to the multitudes: *Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves**

^b Mark xiv. 41.

^c John xii. 27.

^d John xi. 50.

^e John xii. 24.

for to take me^f? This verily was an hour of storm and tempest, for the *Jews* cry'd out vehemently: *Crucify him, crucify him, he is guilty of death*^g. Nevertheless *Jesus* held his peace; and when he was accused of the high Priests, answered nothing^h.

II. Wherefore now complaineſt thou, O my Soul? Say, what is become of thy Patience? Thou art guilty, and *Jesus* suffereth the penalty in thy ſtead. Thou haſt ſinned, and he is ſcourged. Thou haſt done this great evil, which could not be expiated but by his innocent death. What retribution therefore wilt thou make him, for all the benefits he hath done unto thee? And what wilt thou give in exchange for thy ſoul? He laid down his life for thee; what wilt thou render back unto him? *I will receive the cup of Salvation: And call upon the Name of the Lord*ⁱ. Thou canſt do no leſs. And if thou wouldſt not be ungrateful, endeavour to drink it alſo.

JESUS-CHRIST.

III. Canſt thou drink the cup, that I have taſted?

^f Matt. xxvi. 55.

^h Mark xiv. 61.

^g Matth. xxvii. 22, 23.

ⁱ Pſal. cxvi. 12.

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THE DISCIPLE.

I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me.

JESUS-CHRIST.

Drink ye all of it^k. Drink of my wine, which I have mingled^l. And again I say unto you: Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you^m. And say not in your hearts: This is an hard saying, and who can bear it? Cast your eyes upon me, and behold how I bore alone the burden and heat of the day. Tho' there have been some, that have born a heavy burden, yet what was it in comparifon of mine? I stuck fast in the deep mire, where no ground wasⁿ, and yet there was no fault in me. I have troden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me^p. The plowers plowed upon my back, and made long furrows^q. Behold my hands, and my feet^r, how I was crucify'd for you. Reach hither your hands and put your fingers into the print of the nails^s. Feel and han-

^k Matth. xxvi. 27. ^l Prov. ix. 5. ^m John vi. 53.

ⁿ Ibid. v. lx. ^o Psal. lxix. 2. ^p Isai. lxiii.

^q Psal. cxxix. 3. ^r Luke xxiv. 39. ^s John xx. 25.

dle my wounds, and behold how blood and water issueth out of my side. Open the vessels of your heart to receive the precious balm, even the oyl of Mercy and Grace. *Suck honey out of the rock, and oyl out of the flinty rock^w.* I have opened the door of my heart, enter into it. I have caused my side to be pierced with a lance, hide your selves therein.

IV. What ought I to have done more, and have not done it? Answer me. *Abide in me, and I in you^x.* Suffer cheerfully something for me, since I have suffered so much for you. Be not afraid of the Cross which ye see; I have made it light, and easy to bear, by my own example. Come unto me all ye that are in sadness, that have your hearts straitned and distressed with grief, that have no consolation. For I am your comforter. Why are ye afraid in the evil day? I am your protector, your defence, and *refuge in due time of trouble^y.* Tell me, when have I failed those that put their trust in me? When have I not heard them that cry unto me? What saith the Prophet? How read ye? *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a con-*

^w Deut. xxxii. 13. ^x John xv. 4. ^y Psal. ix. 9.

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trite heart: And will save such as be of an humble spirit. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them: And delivereth them out of all their troubles^z. Behold, what words of exhortation I use to you, to the intent ye may not faint in tribulations. Rather ye ought to rejoyce, that ye are afflicted in this world. Count it a sign of my love: And verily it is the badge of my Elect. Open *the sealed Book, the Book written within, and on the out-side*^a, (I mean the old and new Testament) read and understand, how that there never was Saint, unassay'd with temptations and various sufferings, who suffered not injuries and wrongs, who was not in all these render'd more acceptable to God, and more holy in the sight of Men. My Saints profit in adversities, in tribulations they send forth the Odour of their innocence through Patience. *Cain's malice illustrated Abel's goodness.* How can any one be thought chaste, but whom the lust of the flesh hath not been able to master? He sheweth himself a lover of chastity, who with continent *Joseph* is proof against the persuasive insinuating poyson of an ill woman.

^z Psal xxxiv. 17, 18.

^a Rev. v. i.

CHAP. IV.

Patience principally to be exercised in mortifying our own Will.

I. **H**E also proveth himself truly obedient, who, endeavoureth to thwart and oppose the inclinations and propensities of his own will. And such a one with faithful *Abraham* shall be extoll'd for the virtue of obedience, and be replenish'd with heavenly Benediction; because he obeyeth rather the voice of God, than the voice of his own flesh, which is always influenced and byass'd by motions of its own. As to self-will, or private inclination, what shall I say of it? It is the very thing, which my soul most of all hateth. Nothing is acceptable to me, which is vitiated and corrupted with self-will. It is the stain and poyson of all good things alike, whether great or small; whereas true obedience sanctifieth all things whatsoever, and causeth them to be uncorrupt. Let a Man do a good work out of private, or self-inclination, and it shall become less so; nay, in some cases it may be a fault. Forbear doing a good work out of obedience, and it shall

be more meritorious, than if done. For such a Man is advanced to a contempt of himself, and is arrived to a true imitation of *Jesus* the Son of God, and the example of his obedience. But how few do I find, that distinguish themselves by copying after so fair a pattern of obedience? Every one willingly doth what seemeth good in his own eyes; and for this reason he is often misled, and goeth astray. Know ye, O Sons of obedience, that to do evil is never lawful; but to omit sometimes doing good upon the account of obedience, this leadeth you to Perfection. For as perfect charity seeketh not it self: So true obedience is evermore carried beyond its own sight, or judgment of things. Ye obey me, when ye submit your selves to your Governours and those that are set over you. Ye live unto me, whilst ye sacrifice your selves. I have quickened you, I was slain for you: and ye shall live with me, if ye have been dead with me. Mortify, my Children, mortify your own wills, your own sentiments, your own counsels, and every perverse and carnal desire. Slay those enemies, otherwise they will slay you. They will be a sword in your eyes, a lance in your side, a serpent in the way, and a bear in the
the

the path, if ye slay them not. They will not suffer you to sleep upon the couch of a peaceful conscience, and will rob your heart of all repose; for these are they that disturb the peace of *Israel*; that is, of the faithful Soul, which desireth to see GOD. I have fore-warned you. *Wherefore see that ye walk circumspectly, because the days are evil^a: And abstain from all appearance of evil^b.*

CHAP. V.

Of the Examples of the Prophets and Martyrs, by which Patience is taught.

I. **I** Have proposed to you the Patriarchs; and if that be not sufficient, I will alledge the Prophets, because they met with many tribulations in this wicked world. The first saith: *I have found trouble and heaviness: And have called upon the Name of the Lord^c. Tribulation and anguish have taken hold of me: Yet have I not forgot thy testimonies^d. Great are the*

^a Ephes. v. 15.

^c Psal. cxvi. 4.

^b 1 Thes. v. 22.

^d Psal. cxix. 143.

troubles of the righteous: But the Lord delivereth them out of all^c. The Prophet, you see, pass'd his life in troubles and sorrows: But in all pressures, he had recourse to God for deliverance: *When I was in trouble, I called upon the Lord: And he heard me^d*. Another saith: *I weep bitterly, and mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul, is far from me^e*. I was a derision to all my people, and their song all the day. He hath filled me with bitternesses, he hath made me drunken with wormwood. He hath also broken my teeth with gravel-stones, he hath covered me with ashes. And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity. And I said, my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord^f. Nevertheless he found consolation; for he addeth; *The Lord is my portion, saith my Soul, therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. For the Lord will not cast off for ever^g*. A third saith: *Wo is me, for I am as the gatherer of the*

^c Psal. xxxiv. 19. ^d Psal. cxx. 1. ^e Lamen. i. 16.

^f Lamen. iii. 14, &c.

^g v. 24. &c.

Summer-fruits, as the grape gleaner of the Vintage: There is no cluster to eat: My soul hath desired unripe figs. The merciful Man is perished out of the earth; and there is none upright among Men^h. Yet he comforteth himself saying: But I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the GOD of my Salvation: My GOD will hear me. When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his Righteousnessⁱ. Behold the testimonies of the Prophets, how their hearts were wounded with compunction, and how their spirits were comforted and refreshed in GOD. Ye know also the Patience of Job: A noble pattern doubtless, and mirror of Patience, given unto all my servants for a solace of their griefs and pains. Other sufferings also, and temptations of my Saints ye cannot be ignorant of. For all these and especially the Holy Martyrs, were prov'd by severe trials, and horrible torments, and by Faith and Patience triumph'd over the cruelty of their Persecutors. If ye consider the

^h Mich. vii. 1, 2.

ⁱ Ps. 7. 6.

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thing aright, is any one worthy to be crowned, *that doth not strive lawfully*^k? For the proof of a good soldier is in the combat. Lay aside the combats of temptations and conflicts of tribulations, and there will be no victory: And if no victory, no crown of reward is of right due to any one. Therefore saith St. James the Apostle: *My Brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations*^l. And St. Peter: *If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye*^m. And St. Paul: *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ; not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake*ⁿ. Do thou also, admonished by their Examples and Precepts, preserve at all times Patience in thy heart; and in every tribulation and distress resign thy self unto me. *Who is he that will harm you, if you be a follower of that which good*^o? Behold, thy sighs and groans are all numbred: And thou sufferest nothing so small and inconsiderable, but thou shalt be crowned for it. When thou liest in tribulation, remember that this is the Road of the Saints, leading directly to the Kingdom of Heaven.

^k 2 Tim. ii 5.

^l James i. 2.

^m 1 Pet. iii. 14.

ⁿ Phil. i. 29.

^o 1 Pet. iii. 13.

CHAP. VI.

Patience is recommended from the consideration of Profit, by a comparison of the Momentariness of the Pain, and the Eternity of the Reward.

I. **C**OMfort thy self also, in that thou art hereby made like unto *Christ Jesus* thy Lord; and render thanks, that thou art in some sort enabled to make him some small retribution. I say unto thee, that it is more meritorious to suffer adversities, than to do good works. I seem to have abundance of servants; yet they can bear but little. They are cast down by an ordinary tribulation; they are provok'd by a slight affront; they are scandaliz'd upon the least occasion; they are full of complaints when injuries are done them; they cast about for excuses, when they are reprov'd. This is no good way, and far different from what I and all my Saints have trod. Some also say, that they have little peace; and I say, that therefore ye have not peace, because ye keep not Patience. Therefore ye have not peace, because ye give your selves up to your own will, because

cause ye are carnal, and walk according to the old Man. *Whence come wars and fightings among you, but from your lusts?* Ye will not find peace in the present life, save only in your Patience. The more Patient any Man is, so much the profounder peace will he enjoy. *My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth^b.* My peace consisteth in much Patience; in the sufferance of evils; in the contempt of worldly joys. For whosoever would be a friend of God, so it behoveth him to do. The righteous shall have peace; but *there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked^c.* Have peace in God, and not with the world; peace, not with your vices and lusts, but peace, by fighting manfully against them. This is the good and holy peace, and which is acceptable to me.

II. Remember also in thy tribulation, that all labour and pain will have an end in a short time; but the Reward thereof will be eternal and plenteous with me in the Heavens. Again think of the Damnation of many, how inexpressibly great their torments will be. If thou canst bear so little now, think with thy self, how thou couldst

^a James iv. 1. ^b John xiv. 27. ^c Isai. xlviii. 22.
endure

endure everlasting burnings. If a small spark of fire lighting on the least part of thy Body, be so intolerable; what will it be to have the whole cast into unquenchable flames? Wherefore be not afraid of *him, who killeth the flesh*; nor murmur against him, who scourgeth the wretched Body: *But fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell^d*. This, I say, fear, this ponder, this frequently think of; and thou wilt find that all thy tribulation is nothing. Wherefore in all temporal pressures, thou shalt comfort thy self with these words: *Be patient unto the coming of the Lord: for the end of all things is at hand^e. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof^f*. Besides, he that hath no love for any thing that is in the world, beareth afflictions more easily; as having disarm'd them of their sting.

III. All the lovers of the world are deceived, putting their trust in nothing. But the righteous and holy Souls gasp after eternal rewards, and long to be gone out of this world. They desire to have nothing in it; but lay up their treasure in Heaven.

^d Luke xii. 4, 5.

^e James v. 7.

^f 1 John ii 17.

Yet they suffer many adversities; but they defend themselves with the Buckler of Patience. Oftentimes they would choose to be free from adversities and tribulations, nevertheless in all these they commend themselves into my hands, saying: *Father, thy will be done. Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt* ^g. *Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in Heaven, and in earth, in the sea, and in all deep places* ^h: And therefore adversity happeneth unto none without my permission, and just ordination.

THE DISCIPLE.

All thy judgments are true and upright; thou humblest one, and exaltest another; because all the ends of the earth are in thy hand. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and true is thy judgment* ⁱ. *Thou art faithful in all thy ways, and holy in all thy works. All things are as thou willest, and there is none that is able to withstand thee. For thou hast made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all things under the Copes of Heaven* ^k. *Thou art Lord of the Universe;*

^g Matth. xxvi. 39, 42.

ⁱ Psal. cxix.

^h Psal. cxxxv. 6.

^k Psal. cxlv. 17.

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wherefore into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou art my Redeemer. Thou art my deliverer from my fiercest enemies, my Passions and Vices; the lifter up of my heart in tribulations; my comforter amidst the numerous anguishes and distresses that compass me about on every side. Lord, Patience is necessary for me, Patience is my defence, and my refuge. I have said unto *Patience*, thou art my Sister: Unto *Poverty*, thou art my Friend: Unto *Humility*, thou art my Mistress and Mother. Ye are all beloved of the Lord, and blest with the words of his mouth: I wish ye were as grateful and pleasant unto me, and to all his servants, as ye are acceptable unto him. I beseech ye once and again, to abide with us, even unto the end of our Life; for we shall arrive safe with the Lord, if we abide with you.

The End of the Three Tabernacles.

A
P R A Y E R
B Y

THOMAS à KEMPIS,

Which I believe no Language, Ancient or Modern, can parallel; to be used either before, or after receiving the Blessed Sacrament.

I. **L**OOK down, most merciful Father, from thy Sanctuary, and Habitation in the Highest Heavens, upon a Sacrifice well-pleasing unto thee. Cast thine eyes upon that spotless Oblation of thy Only-begotten Son, which he continually shews forth and presents before thee as a satisfaction for us.

For he alone is the High Priest and true *Melchisedec*, who made an Oblation, not of any strange Sacrifice, but of his own proper flesh, upon the Altar of the Cross, for the life of the world.

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Be thou therefore reconciled this day to me a sinner, by virtue of this all-saving Sacrifice. Bend thine ear to the supplication of me a feeble weak Man, exceeding frail and vicious, who am not worthy to look up to Heaven, nor to tread the Earth, because I have so often offended thee my Creator, by an irreverent and stupid transgressing of thy Commandments in thought, word, and deed.

Upon the account of all which, as I have deservedly incurr'd thy most grievous indignation, so have I heap'd up against my self the enmity of all the Creatures: For thou being offended and despised, every Creature of course and by a just judgment, armeth it self against the sinner.

But O thou Almighty and GOD of all consolation, have mercy on me thy servant, from the bottom of my heart repenting and forrowing: Because I was made out of nothing, and being conceiv'd in sin have fall'n as a frail Man.

Spare me good Lord, spare me. Indulge forgiveness to the Prodigal Son returning unto thee from his husks with swine. And standing before the Throne of thy Glory, and craving the support of thy mercy from morning to evening; even un-

til the dew of Grace descend, and a shower of consolation fall upon the earth of my heart, which now is dry'd up and withered by the multitude of my sins.

For thy own sake, my GOD, incline thine ear unto me, and hear the voice of my Prayer. Magnify thy mercies, who art the Saviour of those that hope in thee.

I know, thou wilt not, thou canst not do it for any works of mine, if any such may seem to be: But for the sake of thine own goodness, O Lord, which is infinite.

Furthermore, hear me through the singular Merit of thy most loving and sweetest Son *Jesus Christ*, who was crucify'd and dy'd for sinners, to the end he might blot out the sins of all by his own Passion.

II. Remember, gracious Father, his inestimable charity, how he delivered up his soul to death, that he might give life to his people; who spared himself in nothing, that thou mightest spare a guilty and for ever condemned world.

Remember his most bitter Passion, what grievous and unworthy things he suffer'd: How from morning even to his exit upon the Cross he labour'd for mankind: Crying unto thee, by his blood poured forth, to be reconciled to sinners: To the end he might

might make friends of enemies, and his own rebels and fugitives, Sons of Adoption.

O most reverend and adorable Father, I this day represent unto thee all the signs of the Passion of thy only Son. Behold the Cross, the Nails, the Reed, the Sponge, the Spittings, the Scourges, the Crown of Thorns, the Sweat, the Blood, the Buffering, the Hyssop, the Purple Robe, and the Coat without seam.

Lo, these are the precious ornaments, and Royal Banners, with which thy Only-begotten march'd forth in the substance of our flesh, to subdue the Powers of the Air.

These are the warlike Arms whereby Death was conquer'd, and Human Nature redeem'd. Wherefore by these blessed and glorious Ensigns of the Passion, I beseech thee to forgive all my sins.

Be this venerable and beautiful Armour a defence unto me of singular power against all vices and temptations.

Be this dolorous and lamentable Spectacle my daily looking-glass, and the sweetest comfort and refreshment of my Soul.

III. Receive, most Holy Father, this most ceptable Sacrifice of thy Son's Body, an Oblation which thou thy self hadst prepared for thy self, and decreed for ever Satisfacto-

ry, Worthy, and Sufficient to expiate all sins, as well those necessarily contracted, as voluntarily committed.

Let it avail for me, and for all recommended to my Prayers, for all my friends, and benefactors, whose faith and necessities thou knowest; whether they be absent or present at this solemn Celebration. Let their prayers and devotion ascend up unto thee; let the unspeakable virtue and efficacy of the Sacrament co-operate with them to Salvation; which was divinely instituted and ordain'd, which is not to be examin'd according to the measures of human understanding, but piously to be rever'd, firmly to be believ'd, and to be continu'd even to the consummation of all things.

O most sweet and precious Sacrifice, offer'd up in behalf of us, to thee the Eternal Father, by thy Coeternal Son: Who himself was made a true, a living, an all-saving, and perfect Sacrifice, by one Oblation of himself once offer'd: Who was the only High Priest undefiled, holy and separate from all sin, not needing to pray, and to offer Sacrifice first for himself, as the Law commanded; but by once dying made intercession for the servants and vassals of Death, who neither had, nor could find in all created

ated Nature, what to pay down as an atonement and satisfaction for their disloyalty.

Wherefore now I despair not, nor shall I ever hereafter despair of the pardon and cure of my sins; yea, tho' sin never so often lay hold of me.

For I have found a Fountain, to go and wash in: A Physician, to have recourse to, for the healing of my soul.

I know where is my hope, and all my consolation. For in the sufferings and Wounds of my Lord *Jesus Christ*, the whole of my Salvation, and the entire ground of my hope consists and abounds.

Blessed in all things, be thou, my God, who hast conferr'd so great and immense benefits of divine Bounty upon me. For by these thou kindlest in me a vehement desire to make some thankful retribution to thee and thy beloved Son.

IV. But, O my most faithful Father, what shall I do, for that I find in my self nothing worthy, nothing fit to return as an acknowledgment of the Donative of thy Grace.

Nevertheless, good and bounteous Father, whose are all good gifts; I know, that thou wantest nothing, and yet our small offerings delight thee, provided thou seest they are presented thee devoutly and voluntarily.

Something

Something therefore I will give, and a small matter, which if left to my self may perish, I will sacrifice unto thy love.

For being offer'd to thee it becomes better, and remains more securely mine, and yet I shall not fail of a reward hereafter for my free Oblation. If any one had the heart to give himself freely, and without reserve to thee, doubtless thou wouldest in return give thy self unto him, and that would come to pass which was spoken by the mouth of our Head: *Give, and it shall be given unto you.*

Wherefore now, if thou wilt vouchsafe the acceptance, behold I voluntarily offer up my self, and permit to thy disposal my Soul and my Body, in full assurance of Faith. My own Will therefore (and there is no richer Oblation in thy sight) from this instant, and henceforward for ever, I do with a most free heart, resign up, even as thy beloved Son *Christ* our Lord surrender'd his own Will unto thee, to the end he might, by an absolute renouncing of himself, obtain Salvation for us, prescribing a Form to his faithful followers in those short and comprehensive words, *O my Father, not as I will; but as thou wilt: Thy will be done*^a.

^a Mat. xxvi. 39, 42.

By this example therefore strongly admonish'd, I do, through thy inspiration and assistance, once more resign up my self, and renounce all things that are of the world.

I despise the desires of the flesh: I cast away all the works and wicked suggestions of the malignant Spirit: I devote my self to thy service: I earnestly desire to cleave unto thee all the days of my life; and this religious course I resolve immediately to put in act.

And being well assured that all my imperfections are known unto thee; I accuse my self before thee of all my defects, and with much contrition beg of thee the means of a more perfect reformation; to the end thy most merciful hand, which healeth all infirmity, and strengthneth all weakness, may not be wanting to the relief of my indigence.

This day moreover I make choice of thee for my GOD and Protector, for the governor of my life; for the provider of all my necessities; for the comforter of all my sorrows, anguishes and temptations, as also of all my labours wherewith I am obliged to labour all the days of my life, for the love of thee, and the Salvation of my soul. Thou art my refuge, my city,
my

my habitation; thou art my meat, thou art my drink, thou only art my rest and the refreshment of my soul: Thou art my companion, my friend, my Father and Patron. Thou art the shepherd and guardian of my whole life, to whom I faithfully commend my self with all that is mine: May therefore thy mercy O Lord, be upon me, and thy Grace accompany me ever in all things: May also thine eye be upon me as well by night as by day, and may thy hand always protect me both in prosperity and adversity; and do thou vouchsafe to lead me the directest way into the house of the habitation of thy Glory; where I may bless and praise thee, with thy beloved Son, and Holy Spirit, world without end.
Amen.

F I N I S.

10 JY 60

Mistakes of the PRESS.

PAGE 83, Line 13, for *great*, read *greater*. p. 117, l. 2, for *swelling*, read *swallowed*. p. 121, l. 14, for *how*, read *now*. p. 123, l. 14, for *who admitteth*, read *nor admitteth*. p. 173, l. 11, for *were*, read *where*. p. 174, l. 4, for *the holy*, read *the whole*. p. 334, l. 13, for *the*, read *thy*. p. 366, l. 7, for *heavenly*, read *holy*. p. 369, l. 18, for *attracts*, read *attracts*. p. 513, l. 26, after *swine* no full stop, but a comma only. p. 515, l. 27, for *cap-table*, read *acceptable*.



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APPLIES OF THE PRESS.

For 87, line 13, for given, read given, p. 117, h. 1.
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